

FRANCIS J. BAIN

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## Beyond The Ballot Box

With a Foreword by

Comrade Caldwell Taylor

Secretary for Information & Culture

in the People's Revolutionary Government.

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Francis J. Bain has also written

A CHILD OF THE CARNIVAL

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## PREFACE

THIS is not a book designed for study — but for reading. So the expert — real or imaginary — will find nothing new within. Already, he either knows or rejects the material.

Nor is this one of those journalistic diatribes — suitable reading on a crowded bus or when ready for bed. For this book has a purpose. The purpose is: to stimulate interest. This purpose is also to set up a number of landmarks for the benefit of those who may wish at a later stage to travel along the road of more detailed inquiry. Consequently, the selection of material, however frivolous at times, is made with this end of view.

I make no apology for the frivolities. I am not a research scholar, but a Grenadian who has lived under the weight of tyranny in Grenada for seven long years and who would like to see a broader; even though consequently shallower understanding of our Revolution, than a more rigorous approach can produce. Contradictory opinions are possible; in any case only one man's view is presented.

If a stream of consciousness runs through this book, it is that the upheaval of the Grenadian Revolution must be distinguished from the specific course it assumed.

In order not to burden the reader unnecessarily, I have dispensed with the usual methodology, and in particular have excised the practice of citing sources. This procedure is not ideal, but it fits the overall purpose of simplicity in presentation.

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of our

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

THE author of a book such as this is deeply indebted to scores of people from whom he has learned by exchange of experiences and recollection of events. In addition, my gratitude goes to all those who assisted me directly in this project.

I am grateful especially to Brother John Benjamin, distinguished Grenadian artist, and to Comrade Caldwell Taylor, Secretary for Information and Culture in the Peoples' Revolutionary Government (PRG). Both gentlemen read the entire manuscript. Comrade Taylor also wrote the foreword to the book. Their comments, criticisms and revisions have helped to make this presentation what it is.

Various other persons have read individual chapters and contributed helpful suggestions. Among them I must mention Mr. Ralph Edwards (retired principal), Mr. S.W. Rennie (Businessman), Strachan Gordon (building contractor) and comrade Alfred John (now studying in Cuba.)

Their assistance does not, of course, relieve me of responsibility, since, here and there, I have retained statements of fact and interpretation which they regard as misleading or completely false.

Were it not for financial assistance rendered whether by advertisements or outright contributions the publication of this work would not have been possible. But it must be understood that those persons who assisted in this way had no means of knowing the contents.

I must also record my thanks to Vernon Forrester who most generously accompanied me on all my journeys whether it was to obtain facts or monetary aid.

The ultimate word of gratitude is reserved for my immediate family: My mother and my aunt who had to put up with seeing less and less of me; and my wife and small children who had to tolerate repeated demands for long periods of silence and retreat. Above all I wish to thank my wife for typing the script and assisting me with the proofreading.

## FOREWORD

ON March 13, 1979, the ignominious, Neo-Fascist tyranny of mystic man Eric Gairy was overthrown. This was undoubtedly the most important event in the 500 year old history of Grenada.

The publication of this book, on this most historic event is of profound significance.

Revolutions are always subjected to countless interpretations. The Grenada Revolution is no exception.

Within and without Grenada, there are those who have taken to the toilets with 'BOOLEERMENAIR' since the 'takeover', and are feverishly working in collusion with imperialism and other ruthless, and aggressive forces of backwardness and reaction to derail and ultimately bring down the Revolution; to reinstate Gairy to his Mt. Royal throne.

There are those who have their deep-seated reservations and have adopted a wait-and-see approach; hoping for the best. Hoping that the revolution will preserve their narrow class interests, and in fact embellish their filthy seats of power. What 'frontishness'!

There are those — the vast majority of the people: workers, farmers, youths, students, patriotic and democratic sections of the middle strata, who are prepared to give everything to their revolution. Their BLOOD! For them it is Grenada or Death!

Against this background therefore, this book must be seen as the work of a courageous mind. Brother Jomo has made clear that his book is no intellectual excursion, no university-type analysis.

I swear that the book is honestly devoid of all the hackneyed jargons of the day.

I have read the script twice. I find it a vivid, objective and unpretentious work on a BIG REVOLUTION IN A SMALL COUNTRY; READ IT!

Caldwell Kwame Taylor.

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## CHAPTER 1

### *LEARNING OF THE OVERTHROW*

IT was normal to switch on to Radio Grenada so that I could hear the 6.30 a.m., news. The station was dead, so I switched off. It was March 13, 1979.

"Miss Laura! Miss Laura, put on you radio!" the neighbour called to my wife a little later.

"What?" she asked.

"Revolution!" she replied, "switch on you radio. Revolution!"

"Where, Barbados?"

"No, Grenada!"

By that time the radio was on: "The Government of the criminal dictator Eric Matthew Gairy has been overthrown", came over the radio in a clear, matter of fact voice.

This is how I and many thousands of Grenadians learnt of the overthrow of the tyrannical regime of Gairyism.

Some time later my wife saw a young teacher going down the road. "Pat, boy who do that?"

"Ahh! who more dhan Papa Gad?" Pat laughed.

But you know woman already. She persisted questioning.

"Ah doh know. Ah doh care who. Youself can't see dha is God work?" He gave the V for victory signal, and went on his way.

At that time Pat had succinctly stated the attitude of all Grenadians towards the overthrow: God's work.

Gairyites thought it God's work, because Gairy had stepped up the suppression of the progressive forces in the country. He had from late 1978 increased the harrassment of the Revolutionary Vanguard. Gairy appeared to gain ground and to be stronger, while with every retreat from confrontation the Vanguard appeared to lose face. Gairy boasted more and more of having guns to deal with "the jewel communists". Gairy also stressed to all and sundry that he was divinely appointed to rule Grenada. Some of his followers no doubt fell for this kind of cant. So to such people, only God could re-

move Gairy.  
The rest of us thought that it was God's work, but for quite different reasons.

## CHAPTER 2

### COUP OR REVOLUTION

THE actual seizure of power (on March 13) was a coup. But what type of Coup?

There are different types of Coup:-

Coup de maitre,	a master stroke;
Coup de main,	a sudden overpowering attack;
Coup de grace,	a finishing stroke generally;
Coup de theatre,	a sudden and sensational turn;
Coup de bonheur,	a stroke of good luck;
Coup de hasard,	a lucky chance;
Coup d'etat,	a violent or subversive stroke of state policy.

Clearly the overthrow of Gairy and Gairyism contained elements of all these. Political theorists interested in clearing up conceptual muddles may indulge in language games. The above list should assist them. They should recognise their exercise as a mere game though. Such games are common among undergraduates. An argument might start over whether a spoon consists of a solid piece of metal or rather a set of indivisible atomic particles. Common sense will indicate that both views are correct. It depends on the level of perspective.

There are people who see it in their interest to attempt to belittle and to downgrade our revolution. They say it was not a revolution at all — but a Coup d'etat. I wonder if these people expected us to go Coup de chapeau (touching the hat) to Gairy to effect our revolution? Did these people expect us to say, "Please, Sir, Doctor, Sir, Doctor The Right Honourable Eric M. Gairy. J.P., F.R.S.A., U.F.O., A.B.C.D.....WXYZ, please let us have a revolution". Did they really expect Gairy to willingly abide by the wishes of the people? It is a curious fact that the same people who branded our action a Coup were among the first to raise a howl of protest when revolutionary changes were instituted. Coup or revolution — be that as it may. But to the suffering people of Grenada who have reeled and staggered for so long under the oppressive hand of Gairyism, the debate over use of language represents an impertinence.

Gairy is the one who had in fact carried out a Coup d'etat against the Grenadian people. He subverted the constitution; dragged it into the gutter. Gairy crowned it all by using his mongoose gang and secret police to intimidate and to terrorize the population, while actively making a caricature of democracy by holding joke elections massively rigged with a voters list of 63,000, having over 9,000 bogus names, made up of dead, non-existent or imaginary people. In the meantime the names of known opposition supporters were deliberately omitted. Such were the circumstances of Gairy's Coup d'etat.

But the revolution was underway, and a special chain of events culminated in the revolutionary vanguard using the tip of a gun to lift up and rescue the constitution from the gutter of Gairyism.

An innocent young man was brutally gunned down by a policeman in the town of Grenville. The police made no arrest. But the people, under the leadership of the revolutionary vanguard compelled the Government to have the culprit arrested. This was revolution, not Coup.

An alien, Lord Brownlow, had blocked a road traditionally used by the people to go to the beach. Again it was the same revolutionary vanguard which moved in defence of the people's humanity. The obstruction was torn down and the road reopened. That too was revolutionary. It is a revolutionary act when any group, not in control of the political superstructure can compell a tyrannical regime bent on fascism to yield to the natural desires of the population.

November of 1973 witnessed the NJM leadership intensifying the campaign that all the people should be fully apprised apropos independence. The leadership of NJM arrived in the town of Grenville on Sunday November 18 for a private meeting with businessmen of the district.

Innocent Belmar, a police officer, together with certain criminal elements — secret police types and the mongoose gang — descended on the town. The horrors resulting have been well documented in the report of the Duffus Commission of Enquiry. Suffice it here to say that six members of the NJM were arrested. Three of them were severely beaten, and subjected to torture. All of this for what? For doing what in any civilized country would be seen as a harmless and quite innocent exercise in legitimate propaganda.

The people demanded a say in the type of constitution that would usher in independence, and to...

...as an abandonment of the secret police — Gairy knew that this was a way of requesting his resignation — since he could not maintain his position without these fascist props. So Gairy, typically, responded with more violence, and a systematic harassment of the progressive forces islandwide. A general shut-down of the island was organised, protesting police brutality, and demanding a return to due processes and the rule of law. Gairy was obstinate. He unleashed a reign of terror that culminated in a complete breakdown of law and order; and a rape of St. George's that entailed the systematic looting of several selected business places, and left one freedom fighter dead — while defending unarmed school children — and several others wounded.

As time went on Gairy increased his military and paramilitary forces. He increased the military budget too. But the joke is that his "green beasts" still remained vagabonds, with ancient weapons, and no discipline made worse by pay months in arrears. He never managed to make soldiers of these brigands. It is doubtful too whether he intended them to become soldiers anyway. Discontent was rife and they were always a restive group. You see the rank and file did not themselves escape the vicissitudes in standards of decency and justice under Gairyism. The modern weapons which Chile sent the dictator as Pinochet's notion of medical supplies were never entrusted to these people (the "green beasts"). The weapons were intended to be used by the mongoose gang in any case.

The level of spending involved may have served to create an elite military corps — under different management. But under the tyrant it merely produced a lumpen militariat — taking what they could, where they could, how they could and giving little, if any, in return.

Gairy has an insatiable penchant for activities and projects of a purely prestige nature. How else can one explain a poor country spending massively for a conference centre, and an annual easter water parade, when schools are dilapidated, hospitals are without sheets, and roads are no longer serviceable? Gairy flies first class to go to beg for money from ministers whose Governments decree that they travel economy. Gairy carried off all this with a reckless indifference as to whether or not it will hurt the economy — without serving the thousands of toiling or unemployed Grenadians.

So the military debauchery, waste, and extravagance brought the Government to the brink of bankruptcy.

On the other hand, the peasants (small farmers) — by

far the largest single group of the population were little concerned with prestige. They cared less of Gairy -- he having illegally acquired control of their produce marketing boards (G.C.-N.A., G.C.A., G.B.C.S.,) and replaced their democratically elected representatives by what was largely a band of jokers, puppets ready to dance as the dictator pulled the strings. And so these peasant farmers had no time for his brand of politics. What they wanted was emancipation from injustice, access roads to their farms, and a relief from inequitable taxation whereby certain "big boys" merely made certain token payments "under the table" and so defrauded the treasury.

So a revolutionary situation existed in Grenada in the 1970's. How else can one account for the MacDonald College students unrest? How else can one account for the Nurses taking to the streets? How else can one account for Gairy's infamous "Black Power" speech in May 1970, in which he went out of his way to ridicule the new sense of spiritual attachment to our African heritage? Why did Gairy -- in that same speech -- shower so much praise on North America?

It was because he saw the interests of his imperialist masters being threatened. Further, what really caused Gairy to threaten the population with "steel to cut steel", and "the roughest and the toughest of roughnecks"? Was it because he had a docile and agreeable population? No! Revolution! Revolution, the only meaningful answer to tyranny was on Gairy's hands. And the key to the answer to all these questions is revolution. And a revolutionary vanguard was there -- ready, willing, and able to execute the revolutionary mandate of the people.

That vanguard defended the people in the courts in front of jokers sitting on the bench. That vanguard helped the people to bury their dead -- sometimes murdered victims of the fascist regime. That vanguard was able to compel the dictator to render a little bit of justice to the memory of some of our murdered comrades. That vanguard guided the people and gave good counsel. That vanguard -- at the price of losing face, a circumstance that is politically unacceptable -- refused to sacrifice the lives of the people on the altar of Gairyism on November 18, 1978. That vanguard did all this under constant harassment, each day placing their lives on the line. And most important, that same vanguard promised never to place the lives of the people in jeopardy. And the people remember.

This is why the people answered the call and rallied

and the revolutionary forces in a genuine democratic uprising to throw off the yoke of Gairyism. The entire vanguard operation was carefully planned and most efficiently executed. Such astounding success brought new hope to all but a few traitors -- known for their criminal acts against the people. This is because the people understand that once we have gained control of the political superstructure, we have the key to the reorganisation of our society.

But if the revolution brought new hope in Grenada, it precipitated turmoil abroad. During the very early hours of the revolution sharp tension existed between Grenada and the rest of the Lesser Developed Countries of the Caribbean (LDC's).

John Compton of St. Lucia indulged in an act of treachery of the greatest magnitude. He requested that Her Majesty's Government despatch troops to slaughter the peaceful and freedom loving people of Grenada. They would have had to massacre Grenadians because this was and still remains the only way Gairy could be returned to his throne of obeah and oppression. And Compton must have known that. He must have known that an oppressed people, once having tasted freedom -- albeit for a few hours -- will die fighting in defence of that precious possession, rather than willingly revert to tyranny.

And if anyone still doubts that there was a revolution, a genuine revolution, in Grenada, he must offer convincing answers as to why our action created such tension. In conclusion I submit an answer -- apparently the only reasonable answer. It is that our action posed a threat, a very serious threat to the establishment and the existing social systems. And that is what revolution is all about.



## CHAPTER 3

### THE RISE OF FASCISM

#### FROM LABOURISM TO FASCISM

LABOURISM stands at the crossroads of politics. Much of the verbal confusion surrounding Labourism arises because Labourism employs more or less the same political vocabulary as does socialism. Labourism may strive to produce a shift in the balance of power away from private enterprise and management to organised labour. To the extent that this actually occurs a labourist economy prevails. The system is middle of the road with ideological considerations at a minimum — the economic bargaining power of the workers remaining the main consideration. Certain aspects of the system may be disliked; but its basic assumptions are regarded as valid. This is generally true of the American labour movement. So that unions and employers alike display a typically capitalist behaviour.

Labourism may progress quite easily towards socialism. Then it is the total quality of life of all the people that becomes the important consideration. Socialism has as its basic goal the eradication of privilege and class distinction. Socialism is about equality.

Labourism may veer towards nationalism and ally itself with or give rise to a political party, equipped with a pseudo-revolutionary ideology. Then Labourism can totally lose sight of its original objectives and become the backbone of a Fascist state. This is the role Gairy chose for his own labour movement.

No wonder the dictator set himself up as the bulwark of Capitalism — bullying workers generally, while glibly mouthing platitudes of reformism. This man made it impossible for workers to join the union of their choice. He stated that Barclays Bank should dismiss workers for taking industrial action so as to obtain more meaningful salaries and to be represented by the Union (The Bank and General Workers' Union) of their choice.

The tyrant, who once proudly boasted that he had taught us how to strike, had come round full swing. It is the same man who in 1977 passed laws in his rubber stamp Parliament making it more difficult that workers be able to use their single most powerful weapon — withholding of their labour. That same man, after giving his word to the C. S. A. in a radio

broadcast unashamedly made a mockery of simple decency.

The workers had been told that the Government is fully in support of labour. Those public servants took Mr. Gairy at his word and called off strike action. A Salaries Commission had been appointed. The dictator pledged to respect their recommendations. In fact he was merely playing for time. The Commissioners — all eminent men of good standing in their own respective communities, and appointed, in the very first place, because they are accepted and known to be men of high principles, men of distinction — presented their report. The dictator had all Grenada prostrate. We hung our heads in shame, disgust, and disbelief.

The man went on radio; he hurled a torrent of abuse and insults at the Commission as a whole. He questioned their integrity and competence. He went so far as to state publicly that one of the Commissioners stood to earn extra income if he implemented their recommendations, hinting at conflict of interest. He then lectured all and sundry on semantics. He stressed that the Commission was appointed to make recommendations — not an award. He countered with a ridiculously low offer. Since then various sections have offered apologies to the Commissioners.

But I take this opportunity once more to apologise to the Commissioners, and to ask them not to hold this episode against Grenada. It was an aberration. It was an example of Gairyism — Fascism.

Then the dictator decided to spread terror. He bussed thousands of his supporters to St. George's. He incited them. He threatened the public servants. "If you strike you dead", was the chant directed against the public servants. That, from the same man who in 1951 said: "If you break strike the 'bull' jump you".

People are astonished that the labour leader of 1951 the architect of the workers revolution, the man of whom we sang:-

*"We will never let the leader fall  
for we love him the best of all"*

— could make such an about face. But his platform was Labourism. There were three distinct possibilities; he chose the worst — the road to Fascism. The catch is that Gairy started with and maintained for his movement a rather limited goal — "At the ending of the strike the price shall rise".

Gairy was among the first in Grenada to speak of the

struggle in terms of race and colour; his analysis was right, original, and radical at the time. But he never made next step — that gigantic leap that logic and basic common sense should dictate. He never saw the basic necessity to question the *raison d'être* of the prevailing social system. During the long period of his pre-eminence in Grenadian politics our jail was taking in more and more people — always from the same strata. One set of people were backward, illiterate, unable to participate in a meaningful way in national life — except as beasts of burden — in 1951. Twenty five years ! and the same set of people — and now their children and their grandchildren too — are largely in the same position. Maybe even worse off from alienation from the mainstream, and from frustration. Meanwhile, society was becoming more and more polarized between rich and poor; between town and country — in a country with only 110,000 souls and 132 square miles.

To all appearances the dictator never realised that it was more or less the same set of people who filled the jail — the poor, the uneducated, the unemployed — those who could not afford to buy education, or to buy the justice in the form of legal representation. In short, the exploited and down-trodden. In any case he did little or nothing to alleviate poverty, to improve or advance education or to create employment.

On the other hand the dictator retained for himself dreams of grandeur. He once fielded the lawn tennis balls while the old plantocracy played. Today, he will play the political game; he will be hard-hitting; a scion of the old plantocracy would do the fielding for him. It would seem that his one driving force was his ambition to embarrass the old plantocracy, and to have them weak and frustrated doing obeisance to him. Liberation of the workers was not on the cards. A little rise in wages now and then, just to keep them quiet, and in his corner.

By 1970 the plantocracy was in retreat; agriculture was a shambles; a new business elite was in the making, loyal to, and actively patronized by the dictator. Gairism had ceased to represent the workers; nor was it within the clutches of bourgeois control. Gairism now free-wheeled on the laurels of the People's struggle of 1951. Meantime, Gairy had made the discovery of the omnipotence of the state — particularly, of a totalitarian apparatus. Gairism-Fascism was now a fact. From now on, the logic of the new system entailed the subordination of all other considerations to a single over-riding ob-

jective; that of keeping the dictator — Gairy — in power at all cost. The "roughest and the toughest of rouch necks" were recruited into the police force, and the mongoose gang, that aristocracy of criminals — not unlike the "Nazi storm Troopers" in their lust for terror — were gathered around the dictator, to break up political meetings, and generally to carry out the functions of the "Brown Shirts". Only a pretext was needed to unleash that terror. Black Power conflagration in Trinidad provided the pretext.

## 2. THE POLITICAL ECONOMY AND FASCISM

Agriculture has a dominant role in the economy of Grenada. Traditionally, this sector has been the largest single employer of labour in Grenada.

Agriculture has always been the largest single contributor to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), catering for roughly 50% at times. There have been slight increases in absolute figures, but even so the tendency is to fluctuate.

The State's agriculture is export-oriented. Traditionally, the production of food crop for local consumption was neglected. The reason for this is rooted in the country's colonial history. The fact is that our agriculture has been geared to meet the needs of the metropolitan countries. And it was the "same difference" whether a need happened to be tobacco, sugar cane, citrus, coffee or the spices at any moment in time. Consequently, a relatively well organised marketing system was developed for export crops. These crops included nutmegs & mace, cocoa, and bananas. Further, the unorganised and unregulated nature of marketing for food crops must have contributed to discourage farmers from participating in food crop agriculture.

The Tourist Industry has shown signs of growth. And with manufacturing still in its embryonic stages, and geared for the local market anyway Tourism is second to agriculture as an earner of foreign exchange.

The industry today is a well established sector. It has a well regulated routine. During the "in season" (period) the hotels buzz with business. In the "off season" business is slow and skeletal staffs are maintained. On Tourist Days the taxi drivers could be seen plying their way with magnificent skill and aplomb through winding, dangerous roads in various stages of depreciation and disrepair. There are definite stop points — Grand Etang, for example — on the taxi routes. At these stops pastry and fruit vendors, craftsmen and artisans, drug pushers, entertainers (comedians and fools), bums and

beggars all have their own little hustle to make. The taxis stop at these points as a matter of course. The visitors take in the beauty of our most lovely land.

This is no surprise. After all our lovely land is well known for its lush green hills punctuating the landscape from North to South. Our rugged coastline, set against white sand beaches make a very pleasing contrast with the clear, inviting, unpolluted waters that bathe our shores.

Most visitors are welcomed and are entertained, served with courtesy and with respect; a few, now and again, may be harassed, heckled or cursed outright. Many bring edification and refinement; a minority chooses corruption and degradation.

During the fifties manufacturing contributed merely 2% to the GDP. In the sixties it held rigidly to 3%. However, in absolute terms there were slight increases.

Just before Independence the Government made a great deal of talk about industrialization. They said that Agriculture and Tourism would be supplemented, by industrial development. They boasted that Independence would make that development possible. The fact is that the role of manufacturing and industrial enterprise remained negligible. And such enterprises were not export oriented anyway. Consequently the growth of the manufacturing sector was dependent on the growth of the domestic market. But the growth of any domestic market is limited by the growth of the economy itself.

Given that the growth of the economy (in Grenada) is in turn limited by the performance of agriculture — export agriculture in particular; given the overall poor performance of export agriculture in the years just before Independence; it was reasonable to assume that any rapid or meaningful expansion of industrial enterprises required of the Government one or both of the following:- (i) Definite steps to improve agricultural performances. (ii) Manoeuvres to obtain new markets and to secure old export markets.[

Grenada was not in a very competitive position. Given the scarcity of skilled manpower; given the lack of experience in manufacturing; given the unavailability of capital locally, the relative paucity and unreliability of supplies of local raw materials, it would seem that Grenada's efforts at industrialization would face extremely difficult times. But the dictatorship still persisted in glib talk. On top of all this there were the new difficulties that would crop up on account of the energy

crisis — in attempting to raise capital on the foreign markets. But the misguided tyrant still did nothing to spur agriculture; he did nothing to improve our capital formation as more and more of our food had to be imported from abroad, and more and more our foreign reserves were depleted.

It is taken for granted that in various countries, different people display more or less of the propensity to invest. The evidence is that for one reason or another there were no meaningful investments in Grenada in recent years. Not even by way of feeding the population. We need not go into the details for this absence of useful investments. Suffice it to say that in countries such as Grenada it is incumbent upon Government to offer some form of direction (at least) if it is not capable of leadership in this field.

In the light of the foregoing it remains difficult to understand why the dictatorship should choose to assume leadership in a flower-planting programme while there was the more urgent need of simply feeding the population. Why a private individual should plant flowers instead of food when his food supplies are short is one thing. But when a Government does the same thing it is quite a different matter. For one thing it might not be as easy to call in the psychiatrist.

The trade gap was constantly widening. "This is a normal pattern in a developing country and it is also an indication of the prosperity which the country is enjoying". So said George Hosten, Minister of Finance in his 1970 budget speech. But, in fact, rather than showing signs of development the overall picture was one of stagnation, and complacency in official quarters. There was no evidence of capital growth worthy of note. Even in the fields of public utilities and communications facilities were sadly lacking. Every bridge was 'due for repair'. Construction, one of the possible high users of imported materials had not made any impressive strides either.

Lower down the minister conceded: "What is disturbing, however, is the accelerating growth of the food import bill. A 'Grow More Food Campaign' will be mounted by the Agricultural Department this year so as to make Grenada more self-sufficient in food and less dependent on food imports," he said. That year was 1970.

By Independence the food import position grew worse. However, a national flower campaign was instituted. That is the sort of attitude which was typical of Gaistrysm. In 1977 it was easier to obtain various species of flower plants from the propagator than it was to get cocoa plants, for example. Later on the government announced a hike in the price of cocoa plants and further encouraged farmers to undertake their own propagation of cocoa plants. But trucks could be seen

carrying flower plants from what were supposed to be in the very first place, Cocoa Propagating Stations.

Meantime, the economy was plundered by corruption, incompetence and outright squandermania. The impoverished government was finding it more and more difficult to indulge in patronage — a vital political instrument under Gairyism. There was just not enough to go around. As the neglect of basic development began taking its toll the government was finding it more and more difficult to meet its recurrent expenses. Salaries were late in coming; repairs and maintenance were neglected.

So the iron-fisted tyrant looked at agriculture, and he cast greedy eyes on the fruits of the farmers' toil. And he pounced. He acquired control of their export produce marketing boards, one by one — always with a show of force. These were then placed in the service of Fascism.

Also the oppressor's eyes fell upon the estates. He embarked upon a programme of land acquisition, always mouthing platitudes of reformism. — "land for the landless", agrarian reform, acquisition for action and progress, etc. But, for all the rhetoric, one thing was clear; the dictator simply intended to increase his personal control.

These estates were to suffer from the fact that policy was determined mostly on the basis of non-economic considerations. As the state of affairs deteriorated the workers were called upon to give their labour, free on certain days, as a means of "self-help".

Meantime, the dictator travelled around the globe with increasing frequency — "to meet with potential investors". Scandal followed scandal, as one by one these shady characters — with the fly by night enterprises — came, and then in due course left our shores. All along, the dictator never accepted that the economy was on rough waters. He always claimed that under his dynamic leadership, and guided by the Supreme Architect Grenada was doing well. All this time he lived in style. Government trucks loaded with vegetables, wild meat, etc. could be seen leaving the estates on a weekly basis. It later turned out that these trucks were bound for the dictator's storehouse at Mt. Royal for use at his many night clubs and hotels. In the meantime customs duties rose higher and higher. But alcohol escaped. This benefited the dictator in that he obtained liquor cheap to stock his night clubs.

Meanwhile, nothing effective was done for the men who represented the bulk of the population — the peasant and the farm worker. Land reform looked handsome on paper, but privilege still remained in the hands of the more co-operative businessmen and the few remaining landowners. This must have been the result, since the dictator nationalized — not to socialize ownership but — to establish State Capitalism. This point is crucial, because a lot of verbal confusion is

based on the habit of equating nationalization with socialism. Indeed, it is the direction followed after nationalization that determines whether socialism will be the result or not — the accompanying rhetoric notwithstanding.

## CHAPTER 4 THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENT

THE dictator used his majority in Parliament to achieve all his Fascist powers -- all very nice and legal. The entire business was a mockery. So by the time of the overthrow Parliament (at the dictator's behest) had passed laws to subvert itself and to make the constitution look like a joke. A high ranking Government Officer said that Government -- in effect Gairy could legislate to "make right wrong and wrong right". Parliament, then, became a model of corruption -- with members on Government side merely going there to say "Aye" and the Speaker to say "The ayes have it".

The post-Independence era was marked by even greater cupidity of get-rich quick politicians; and by the even greater proliferation of the secret police -- all done nice and legal. The budget speeches were like parodies of high comedy -- the Minister quoting nonsense figures, knowing that they were unattainable, but not caring because "the ayes have it" will seal everything of course.

After that the opposition could hog it. Meanwhile, inflation dug savagely into the slender incomes of salaried public servants, and farmers, the prices of whose crops were kept low by a combination of the ineptitude and inefficiency of the bureaucracies set up by the dictatorship to run their (the farmers') affairs. Many came to regard Independence -- and democracy with it -- as a liberal cornucopia of political patronage, nepotism, chicanery, brutality, and politics in particular as the root cause of division in the society.

Many yearned sorrowfully for the days of colonialism. At least the administration was predictable, the country had been administered by men of some scholastic attainment and not by any jumped-up ignoramus of an opportunist who climbed unto the party bandwagon or could "Yes Sir" his way into a lucrative post.

With the parliamentary processes thus frustrated, and with Gairy's will enforced on it, Parliament fell further and further into disrepute. By this time we found ourselves face to face with an animal that we had never met before -- an all powerful Parliament, controlled by, and obedient to, the wishes of

do. The dictatorship had 'acquired' its majority in Parliament and it viewed Parliament as just another platform for one-sided politics. Laws were passed with the sole aim of perpetuating the dictatorship. The national interest meant nothing to the dictatorship.

This led to the progressive intellectuals openly calling for new and possibly draconian methods of dealing with the situation. The people lay helpless before the onslaught of a Parliament controlled by a dictator gone mad -- the satisfaction of his greed for power and more power his sole aim. He used Parliament to pass the most backward forms of repressive laws. Meantime, his 'yes men' in Parliament merely engaged in a series of wheeling and dealing. Having no real concept of their role, they came to regard themselves as servants of and only answerable to the dictator. He in turn liberally supplied them with perks, trips abroad -- the results of which were never reported -- and each man ruled a certain section like a feudal chieftain. And this is no joke. There was the one who thought that Paradise estate was his so he could come there on a daily basis and "see to it that no jewel ent get no damn coconuts to buy here.....Dhey bad-talking the man so much! What dhey coming in Government place for?" This was at a time when coconuts were scarce and cooking oil was not obtainable in the shops. That same man also said: "Ah doh want no jewel hyah atall", when a scrunting young sister went to look for a day work.

Another one before getting the boot, reigned over Carriere and Mt. Horne estates. Another man had Belle Vue estate as his fiefdom and so on. These ministers in effect feudal chieftains -- supplied secret police, and co-ordinated the work of spying or terrorizing the population. The dictator created ministries as time went on to satisfy his need to give sinecures to his party members. At the time of the overthrow, everyone of his parliamentarians held an office; he made extensive use of appointments such as Minister of State and Parliamentary Secretary.

From time to time and regardless of the subject matter on the order paper -- he unceasingly lectured Parliament in praise of himself. He repeatedly spoke of the "divine nature" of his mission. He claimed direct guidance from the "Supreme Architect". He boasted of "success" with regard to Expo '69. He patted himself on the back for what he had

achieved on behalf of women. The first Grenadian woman to enter and win the Miss World Contest did so with the full backing of his government. The first woman Governor in the entire Commonwealth was appointed on his advice, all because of his love, respect and high esteem for our womenfolk — notwithstanding the fact that that goodly Dame had to run like hell from the terrors of Gairyism. This little incident will serve well to show how the dictator's mind functioned or malfunctioned just on the eve of Independence.

With Parliament unable to function, or give redress to repression faced by the people, thousands marched the streets daily asking for a little peace, a little work, a little bit of justice, an end to police brutality and a return to the Rule of Law. As already stated, Gairy increased the brutality. The people turned to our Governor. She made a statement — in effect compassionate towards the cries of the people, her own people. She hoped for a return to normalcy. She offered to resign if the constitutional neutrality of her position was not respected. She asked that all groups inform her as to whether they felt she should go or stay. That lady did what any right thinking person would have done in the situation, seeing that she represented the body politic as a whole and not any mere partisan or sectional interest.

In effect, the lady offered herself as a mediator between the people and a recalcitrant Government. Conciliation was not yet impossible. That was a most brilliant stroke of statesmanship. But such things are not possible under Gairyism. You see, such a situation would thrust the lady centre stage in the full blast of the spotlights. She would have become an instant heroine.

But Gairy had no time for any Joan of Arc. He then made a statement condemning the lady's courageous effort — on behalf of the people — and concluded by saying she had been relieved of her office. In that statement he reminded her — in so many words — that she was his Governor. He had appointed her, not the people to whom she now chose to make her statement. Poor jab Gairy! Gairy boy you missed the boat! Gairy read the constitution upside down as he once claimed he read The Torchlight — and we know he read everything else. Dame Hilda's resignation was accepted by Her Majesty, effective the date of her statement. Gairy's dismissal was null and void.

Long after his mistreatment of this lady Gairy still praised himself for appointing the first lady Governor.

During a budget debate he treated the nation to a lecture on the 'democratic' Government of Pinochet in Chile.

At every opportunity he gave his version of Human Rights. He lectured the nation that the opposition — Jewel in particular — were jealous and envious of him; they simply coveted his position and that of his ministers, he cried out hysterically.

In the name of Human Rights, this man passed anti-labour legislation. He passed the notorious Newspaper Amendment Act. At that time he had already acquired the "West Indian" newspaper. This new law was aimed at putting a stop to the publication of the "New Jewel", the organ of the N. J. M. However, the measure failed to have the desired effect — the N.J.M. successfully publishing now underground and more determined than ever — in tone anyway — that the dictator must go.

With elections in the offing he rammed through a ban on the use of loudspeakers. On the surface though, there was no ban since all that was required was that an application be made to the Commissioner of Police. It therefore looked as though Government merely wanted to regulate the use of loudspeakers. However, in practice, it turned out that the then Commissioner seldom found it convenient to give permission to the N. J.M. in particular. But the members of the governing party notably Chrysler Thomas always had the speakers atop their cars.

Important measures — sometimes of a highly controversial nature (e.g. Stamp Duty, Foreign Exchange Tax) — were rushed through all stages at one sitting of Parliament. It no longer mattered anyway. The 'Wednesday Crowd' brought news to him. He went home and dreamed, and in his direct contact with "Almighty God" he obtained new directions to enact more repressive legislation to further stunt the people in their just demands. It would be difficult for people outside to understand why we should at that time be fighting Gairyism. To all appearances, Gairy seemed to represent the progressive forces in the land.

In the light of our political history we may have been considered insane. Gairy's G.U.L.P. had never been convincingly defeated. All he had done was to use the constitutional process. He had an overwhelming majority in Parliament — the G.N.P.'s cry of "thief" notwithstanding. As a matter of fact it is my opinion he really did beat these jokers. He had been talking of Independence since 1969. Independence was fea-

tured regularly in his 1972 election campaign. He used the device available in the constitution to avoid holding a referendum. To the world at large the entire episode of our pre-Independence Crisis must have been ludicrous. While people were sacrificing their lives and fighting for their Independence elsewhere, thousands were marching up and down our capital demanding that the architect of Independence should step down. Of course, the British was right not to withhold Independence. They had to recognise the authority of a Government that held 13 out of 15 seats in Parliament — and to deal with them accordingly.

But since the 1972 election things had changed. Gairy had stepped up his terror, for one thing. A large number of young men who would normally have migrated was forced to remain at home. During the fifties and early sixties, the youths who could not find a place in the sun at home simply left for greener pastures — mainly England, America, Canada, and nearer home, Trinidad. It is important to note that among these emigrants would normally be found the cream — the more conscious, the more adventuresome. So during those years there was an escape valve. But with the new immigration policies pursued by these countries it became more and more difficult for Grenadians — along with other peoples from the Caribbean to migrate to the metropolitan countries. In addition many of those who would normally remain in these countries then found that racism was too much, the atmosphere of hostility which nurtured the anti-immigration laws and which was in turn accelerated by these laws was too much.

Godamit, they had a homeland and they were going home. Such people having lived in the metropolitan countries, come home with quite definite ideas about what should or should not be done in their country. Then, there are the professionals who returned home in the late sixties and early 70's. On account of the particular time during which they were abroad — the era of Black Power and student unrest — they returned home with a level of consciousness by far superior to that of their predecessors and by far more relevant and attuned to the basic vibrations of the people.

Formerly those who returned home emphasised their foreignness — their acquired accent, their acquired habits. But the new breed experienced an alienation while resident in these countries. Concurrently, they felt a certain closeness — a new sense of oneness — with the people, the ordinary man in the street. Such people took it for granted that Parlia-

ment as then constituted — in fact the entire paraphernalia of the Westminster type of constitution was patently unsuited to our people. In any case it was plain to see. The system was not working. It had failed to measure up to the natural expectations of the people.

In former days the intelligentsia tried to remain aloof from politics and to accept whatever perks or status that the system had to offer to the educated sons of former black slaves. These people had no natural political base as such.

They saw themselves as being liberated from their roots. They rejected the need for spiritual nourishment from their roots. But the established members of the upper stratum still never accepted such people. They were tolerated. In addition, those from the top strata who went away had no delusions about their role on returning home. Neither did they have any real desire to upset the apple cart. They remained out of politics and the little rabble rousers ran the Government. They made the money, and the politicians made the laws so that these bourgeois oriented people could go on squeezing the people. All they needed to do was to attack the oppressors during the election campaign.

Then, in less than five minutes time the people would exercise their rights — that is whatever vestiges were left to them after discounting for fraud and corruption — by placing an X.

On the other hand, the new intelligentsia made common cause with the people. The people's fight was their fight too. They rejected the notion that what is good for the British is good for us. They refer more and more to the long process through which the present day British system had evolved. They know that a King lost his head, literally. They know also of the period of puritannical tyranny that followed, and that another King had to run. The British Parliamentary System is rooted in their history. The experience and the temperament of our people being quite different immediately place some doubt on the relevance of the Westminster System. The new intelligentsia was willing to experiment with new forms. And after observing the dismal failure of the then prevailing system they were determined that it would have to go.

They therefore challenged its entire basis — not confining themselves to the more detestable features. In any case the system had fallen so far into disrepute that the people no longer felt anything useful could come out of it. Increasingly the politics of the left — with its emphasis on unconventional

methods -- came to be regarded as the only road that can lead to success.

That was not strange; issues were no longer important in debates; members of Parliament traded insults as time went on. But it was not a free-for-all. Notably, under Mr. Speaker A. A. Reason Gairy could connect the Jewel with the "Body in the Drain" murder; he could blame the Jewel also for the assassination of Innocent Belmar M.P. These accusations were levelled during debates which had absolutely no connection with the aforesaid crimes.

Further, with respect to the former crime there were men who had been charged, prosecuted, convicted and hanged. No connection could have been properly established between these men and the Jewel. In the case of the Belmar assassination, if anything, the trial showed beyond the slightest adumbration of a doubt that the accused persons — all members of the NJM — were innocent. Yet the dictator persisted in accusing the Jewel for his "new breed of crime".

He made a papyshow of our judiciary by persisting in accusing the people acquitted by the High Court. And Mr. Speaker was helpless. It is doubtful, in the light of his performance, that he understood his role. He was Gairy's errand boy all right. It was made clear when Gairy took objection to Unison Whiteman's remark that the laws were not applied impartially. The laws were made, Mr. Whiteman said to persecute one set of people; those who patronized the dictator's night clubs could get away with anything.

Mr. Whiteman's ejection was then ordered by Mr. Speaker A. A. Reason, to satisfy the dictator's ego — since Mr. Whiteman would not withdraw his perfectly legitimate statement.

In the 1976 elections the opposition parties formed an alliance. The People's Alliance sat as the opposition in Parlia-

ment, with Maurice Bishop as leader of the opposition. But the Government persisted in dealing with the opposition as though it were made up of three completely separate and independent groups. The GNP, and the UPP too, fell for that trap.

The dictator capped it all by allowing the GNP and U-PP to use a public address system for their meetings while such right — then a privilege — was denied the NJM. But the people remembered the past performance of the GNP. They remembered how they had raised the GNP members who at-

tended the independence conference. They remembered how they had been misled by these same people — many times before. The people remembered all those who signed and still said that Gairy's planned independence was blocked.

The people also remembered too that it was the NJM that got them to vote for GNP candidates — of course excepting Carriacou. And the people were disgusted and embittered, because their votes were then being used to prop up the dictatorship. Pointedly, the people did not vote for the Alliance so that Winston Whyte of youngest Minister fame, should return to the service of his old master.

No more tomfoolery from the GNP! Away with the traitors; end monkey business; no hanky panky with Gairy. These were the cries of the people in the light of the GNP sellout. The men elected to Parliament except NJM were not carrying out the people's mandate. It was a mandate that left no room for compromise with the dictatorship. But here was the GNP—UPP—openly collaborating with the dictator. Another traitor of the people's cause, Wellington Friday, had already come full swing to become the Minister of Education and Flying companion of the dictator in U.F.O circles.

The people demanded action; action to halt this disgraceful debacle. That action came on March 13, 1979. And now, the traitors must be prepared to "let those who labour hold the reigns" so that we

"May... with faith and courage  
Aspire..... build, advance  
As one people one family  
towards

**“Not just another society but a just society”.**



## CHAPTER 5

### GAIRYISM, CULTURE AND THE SOCIETY

I am deeply interested in culture. As far back as I can remember I had that interest. I harbour a great respect for the circumstances and for the situations which encourage cultural development or which make culture possible. I love and derive pleasure from those expressions commonly associated with culture. Under Gairyism the culture suffered. Growth was stunted. At the same time it is crucial that we realise that Gairyism was incapable of procuring the material conditions which made cultural development possible. That is one reason why I came to detest Gairyism.

Please allow me to state that in my enthusiasm and my search for the beautiful in culture I find it difficult not to indulge in a little discrimination here and there. This is not to say that I hold the idea that there are any people with no culture whatsoever. It is my opinion that every people have a particular way of living. This way of living would, for any particular people have its traditions, its methods of transmitting ideas to succeeding generations, its traits, its mores and its laws.

These are largely non-material things. But it is generally from these non-material premises that we get the more material expressions of culture such as:- music, literature, painting, sculpture, etc. It is the non-material considerations (beliefs for instance) which give rise to the fundamental needs of the people, and determine their approach to the problems that must crop up from time to time. So when introductions are made into the society their cultural validity depends on their relevance to these fundamental needs and how they contribute towards a solution of the basic problems of the society. It is in this light that Gairyism must be estimated vis-a-vis the culture.

To my mind culture is the way of living that any society develops to satisfy those fundamental needs, to perpetuate itself, and to supervise social experience generally. Therefore we discard the misconception — peddled to us by racists, primarily — that we have no culture. In short we are not dead.

We have needs. Over the years these needs have been changing to suit the conditions of our life.

At one time we were slaves. A culture complex was developed around slavery. Some people use this circumstance — even today — to explain everything about us; our concern, however, is not with morality or contempt as regards that institution but with the conditions of cultural growth resulting from its existence. The slave complex among the negroes involved all those traits — material and non-material — associated with the tribulation of the most brutal and inhumane brand of slavery ever to be enforced. Some of these traits are: the kidnapping, the shipping, the auction sale, massa, the whip, the toil, massa's wife, the stud farms and so forth.

With the official abolition of slavery, the black man was for all practical purposes in Grenada left without freedom, still enslaved, still effectively debarred from exercising many of his basic human rights. In 1951 a blow was made against this condition. Today we still see that our workers exist in semi-slavery. It is around these circumstances that we must look for any cultural growth. Out of this milieu we get the play acting, sham, the calypso. We also see the desire to copy massa's ways.

Consequently, in looking at our culture we must bear these firmly in mind. That way, we do not expect our people to orbit the moon, when our basic need is to strive to be admitted as free men and women. This is one reason why Gairy's obsession with UFO's was irrelevant, and totally repugnant to our people. And one reason also why Carter and company would like to see the dictator returned to power so that they can continue their exploitation of our people and of our resources while the dictator seek to satisfy his own ego and his delusions of grandeur. All the time though they tell us that we have no resources.

Yet they act to keep us in oppression, and Gairyism looked the other way if not rendering active support to the oppressors. In years to come these same oppressors who aided and abetted Gairy in his crimes against the people would try to throw Gairyism in his face. They would point to the barbarism, superstition and fanaticism — the traditional colonialist image of Black peoples — associated with Gairyism; and they would try to lay the blame on us and on our culture. But we must put the record straight.

It is agreed that Nazism is the natural culmination of hundreds of years of German culture stretching from the twi-

light days of Atilla the Hun, through the centuries to Martin Luther, Bismarck, Kant, Hegel and Nietzsche. But not so with Gairyism in Grenada. We have our own line of heroes: Fedon, Donovan, Marryshow could not give rise to Gairyism. Gairyism is an isolated mutant — an aberration indeed.

How well we have done in this or that field compared to other people may leave much to be desired. But when our achievements are considered in relationship to the other parts of our culture, the conclusion may be different.

Our society is mainly supported by agriculture. As such agriculture is very well placed to influence and to determine attitudes. Consequently, it is no surprise that our leading artist John Benjamin should choose to produce his masterpieces on themes concerning agriculture. These masterpieces depict: the nutmeg, the cocoa, the coconut tree, the sugar cane field.

Grenada is known for its beauty. So obviously there are quite a number of works depicting the beauty of the island.

But it is a curious thing about our people. John Benjamin was never taken seriously in official circles. But he made his impact notwithstanding non-interest in his work. The strength of character that comes through his work must have been fed by some fountain from within this man. That fountain of hope and courage must have sustained his efforts. And more and more the people are beginning to understand Benjamin. Though small, our contribution in painting is still something to which we can point. It is left to us to encourage the younger artists.

There are those who would like to boast that we have done well in calypso; they only make us look silly. Our calypsonians merely try to imitate their Trinidad counterparts, and what a poor initiation it is! But they are not to be given all the blame. Gairyism had forced the culture to become governmental. Calypso, dance, what have you, must serve to prop up the dictatorship or it must go. In effect they were forbidden to criticize the establishment; possessing little choice in the matter — they were confined to trivialities.

We have also done something worth passing on in the the craft of furniture-making. In this regard I had an interview with Mr. Courtney, a 'joiner' — furniture maker. He knew many old 'joiners' and gave a few names. Here they are: Mc Burnie from Sauteurs, Tony Vincent of Grenville, Raleigh Walker of Paradise, Mark of Levera, Gipson of Grenville, Daniel of Soubise. The specialty of all these men was what Mr. Courtney called 'old time beds'. Mr. Courtney himself used

to make these old time beds.

Mr. Courtney went on to discuss the material with me. He said pitch pine, mahogany, and locust were the materials used. But in terms of beauty, durability, and workability mahogany was always preferred. However, he said, you couldn't eat your cake and have it, mahogany was more costly than the others.

As he mentioned durability with regard to material I enquired how long he thought such a bed can last. He laughed. "Forever!". He elaborated for me. The laths may break. However, that was no problem. If one broke it could be replaced. "In the case of the mahogany, once there is no sap all the other wood will go but mahogany remains", he concluded.

We went on then to the approximate time it would take to make a bed in the old days. He said: "days were longer when we made those beds, so it took only about three weeks." I don't know about that. But I did not argue. The sociologist may be equipped to tell us something about it.

Mr. Courtney said further that, if we used the same old laborious methods it will take more than six weeks today.

The cost of one of those beds in the 20's was something like forty to fifty dollars. Today, one can cost anything like six hundred dollars. However, for any friend Mr. Courtney would make one for five hundred dollars, he said.

I asked him to elaborate on the big difference in cost. He said that in the 20's mahogany was  $1\frac{1}{2}$ d per ft., in the 30's it was  $4\frac{1}{2}$ d. per ft. Today mahogany is \$1.50 per ft. Labour was 2/6d. per day then. Today it is \$20.00 per day for a foreman.

(This interview took place in 1973)

The old time beds were better — for one's back anyway. But the cost is prohibitive for the ordinary man today. In this same style, there were chairs, tables, and the like. It would be unwise to say that Grenadians are the only ones who ever produced furniture of that style. However, the fact remains that there were Grenadians sufficiently interested in aesthetics to make such furniture possible.

I have chosen to give such a detailed account because it will show up the extent to which our culture is subjected to imperialism. Today, it is not strange to see North American travellers trying to purchase various parts of these old beds. I was told that they offer as high a price as a hundred dollars

(U.S.) for a single post. There is a gentleman from Dominica who is in the furniture business. He came to Grenada quite often to purchase parts of the old time furniture.

I learned from him one day that these were used to make beds for sale to the French people whom he contacted in neighbouring Martinique. So the masterpieces of our craftsmen will make their way into salons, drawingrooms, and bedrooms of France and North America. And when our land is left completely denuded of these works of beauty, some white racist imperialist will be bold faced enough to assert that we never made them at all. Nothing is wrong with a little sale here and there but this indiscriminate sale can do no good to us — notwithstanding the American dollars.

And the dictator did nothing to stop this traffic. And because of poverty the ordinary Grenadian could be of very little help. In the light of the foregoing, the establishment of a national museum had been a golden opportunity. But it would seem that the dictator saw this national museum as a means of flaunting his bogus awards and to make us look stupid in the eyes of foreigners.

However, in the line of handicraft and related arts the Government had indeed taken some initiative. A centre for training and trading was functional. Exhibitions were held too. In fact it has been functioning under the direction of Reverend Stanley Peters for a few years before the fall of the dictatorship. In the centre the students were trained to work with various materials: straw, fibre, wood, shells (animal, sea, coconut).

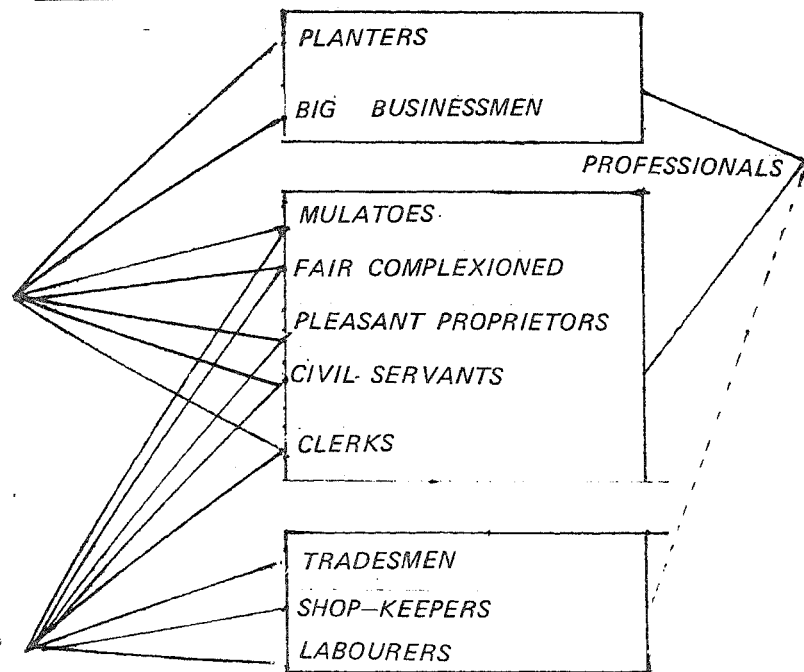
The products were usually sold to tourists. Our local people prefer the imported material. I am not going to say whether this preference is a good thing or not. Suffice it to say that if one wants to encourage the local craftsman it would be well to start discouraging such attitudes. After all, the artist and the craftsman must have some form of patronage if he is to continue with his work. The dictatorship missed the bus here. In order to stimulate interest, exhibitions should have been organised on a regular basis — not the haphazard, disorganized affairs. But the dictatorship was too busy with other things, with organizing of the secret police for instance, to give any serious consideration to the welfare of the craftsmen.

Gairy saw no need to give serious consideration to our culture. He took no significant steps to affirm the existence of our own culture. He never attempted to defend it against the massive onslaught of cultural imperialism particularly by the

U.S.A. He even put a ban on Jab Jab masqueraders at carnival, because he felt the Jab Jab offensive to the all important tourists. Therefore, like everything else, he left the culture flat.

Since Government failed to take significant action to assist our artists and craftsmen, the question arises: What other sources of patronage were available? To answer this question it is necessary to look at the make up of the society. Further, the form or extent of the patronage would depend on the general level of education; the value and place of aesthetic considerations in the country; the amount of money available for spending on such items as art or craft work.

#### SOCIAL STRATIFICATION IN GRENADA BEFORE 1951



At the apex of the society were the members of the old plantocracy and their close allies, the businessmen. These two were interrelated by family ties. The former included the owners of the large estates — well over one hundred acres; in some — if not all cases more than one such tract of land was owned. These people spent more of their time abroad than they did at home. The latter were in control of the firms like: Hankeys, Huggins, McCartney & Williams, Jonas Browne & Hubbard.

These firms were largely foreign owned and foreign oriented. They catered for Irish potatoes but not for yams. It was inevitable therefore that such men, should, like Robinson Crusoe, constantly look outside.

Generally members of these two groups were of same colour. For one thing the more brilliant sons of the estate owners opted for business if not inclined to the professions. Thus we see that the ones best placed, financially, at least, to patronise the arts were outward looking. They never really considered this place home. The people, as far as they (that group) acted anyway, were just so many natives to exploit.

Anything coming from these "natives" then was to be relegated to the lowest place. To emphasise this point one has only to mention the attitude which such people displayed towards steel band and calypso.

There was a large middle tier. Included here were the mulattoes, fair complexioned peoples, peasant proprietors, a sprinkling of native public servants — distinct from expatriates in colonial administration, clerks and generally their offspring.

The mulattoes had family ties with the old plantocracy. They were generally the bastard sons of the planters. These mulattoes were generally put to manage or to oversee the estates, where in the absence of their fathers or other brothers they ruled despotically. Part of this despotic rule was to downgrade the blackman or anything black, while actively following in the footprints of the fathers.

Then came the fair complexioned people, who actively ape the mulattoes, trying to be more mulattoe than the mulattoes themselves. As far as frustrating the artist goes, these were the most dangerous set of people. Because of their colour for one, they had access to what little education that was available, as well as to the little menial jobs — crumbs that existed in the management hierarchy.

They used their education and their position to become snobs, generally. But this last was not their fault altogether. This was due to the type and orientation of the education offered at the time. Such education had no social purpose relevant to the actual conditions and circumstances of their life. It was education geared to produce a reservoir of wage slaves.

It is very significant that Gairy saw no real need to challenge such a system. The very basis of such a system was an-

athema to the progress of the very people, who loved him so much, and whom in return he claimed to love, and to represent their interest.

Then came the peasant proprietor. This guy was generally insecure. He was crude and had no time for fineries. His religion was money. He always owed the firms in the capital. Really he was not a bad fellow. He was on the threshold of wealth. Having to deal with men at the apex, he had seen from afar the perks of wealth.

The door was open a crack; he was determined to force it open, all the way and to enter, regardless to if he succeeded in destroying his family, his life or his health in the process. Consequently his first instinct was the acquisitive instinct. He had no time for art. And in his vocabulary, the artist, the bum, the vagrant, the wastrel, all meant the same thing. The clerks were not very well off, although they were ascribed a fairly high regard within the community.

We may sum up the middle tier thus. They were generally impoverished. They were self-centred. They looked after themselves, doing a little tomming here, a little tomming there; jockeying here and there, getting at each others throats for positions — a little toe-hold — in the white man's domain.

Then we have the salt of the earth. The labourers! These people were born on the estates. They worked on the estates — from dawn to dusk. They had an existence little better than the beasts of burden they tended. Such people could not patronize. They could not devote very much time to consider things of beauty. However, our cultural heritage showed that they understood the social purpose of artistic creation.

As far as they were involved in art and by their achievements they showed a thing or two. They showed that artistic creation does, and should have a social purpose or else it would be vapid, empty. Without a social purpose artistic creation is invalid, worse than worthless for the time spent on it; unworthy of serious consideration since it loses the opportunity to enlighten, and to liberate the people out of the depths of decadence, and oppression.

They taught us that productions without a social purpose are not worthy of the name art. They showed that such works are irrelevant since they leave the culture flat and have no observably beneficial influence on the community. So we see, they did what they could. They sang their songs of resistance objecting to tyranny and oppression.

At nights, especially on moonlight nights, there was drumming and dancing. They sang out their throats releasing their frustrations with an unbalanced life -- tortured by unequal justice. One man or woman would be leading, while the others answer in the chorus.

Also there is another side which may be considered good or bad depending on how you look at it. Many of their songs were made on whatever scandal that was current. This last bit was so especially around the carnival season. They also practiced for their carnival display too. Whatever one might feel, these songs helped to keep people on the straight and narrow road. You did not want Jab Jab to sing on you. And if you played the fool you know "dthat Jab Jab go sing on you" come carnival.

At this point it is important to note two things in passing. The dictatorship in its final days, harrassed youths for their drumming. The Fascist police smashed or confiscated their drums. The youths made more drums and the police harrassment continued. The dictatorship also banned Jab Jab. Why? It is important that at about that time the work of the NJM had attained maturity.

There was a general rise in the level of awareness throughout the society. People were becoming more conscious of their origins; more conscious of their need to relate -- in a meaningful way -- to their roots. At the grass roots level there was an increasing display of militancy, and resistance against the wishes of the dictator. They were determined to hit back -- hard -- if hit by the dictatorship. And it was a vicious circle for the dictatorship. Awareness created an interest in the drum, the drum created a respect for the people who traditionally beat it, respect for these people led to meaningful social intercourse. You know, if one wants to know the drum he must find out from those who already know -- the labourers. They were willing teachers.

But the relationship was not onesided. While they taught the drum to the youths the youths identified the oppressor and passed on the politics of enlightenment, thus raising the consciousness of those with whom they came into contact, while nurturing their own consciousness to ever higher levels of understanding and the recognition that we must be determined to use force to get rid of the Fascist dictatorship.

So Gairyism was in panic. It recognised the threat of brute force. For the first time in Grenada there was a group of determined men -- and sufficiently representative of the

wishes of the whole people -- willing to challenge Gairy in such fashion. And no one understood the message better than Gairy himself. That is his own language -- Brute Force!

Brute Force is the only language that Fascist oppressors know and respect; it is the only universal language that can compel a sense of true respect from exploiters all over the world. So Gairy, to buy time, suppressed the brothers.

At about the same time scandal and corruption were rife. So the Jab Jab and the Shortney masqueraders were having a field day. They were not so concerned with the pregnant school girl during those days. Their themes ranged from the dictator's comic interest in the acquisition of bogus honours to the man who could not show bill for his television, to the minister's big house, during the construction of which Public Works Department (PWD), trucks could be seen bringing materials to the site -- under cover of darkness. And this was offensive to the dictatorship. Witness the treatment of the old mass character "Endless nites"...

Like in neighbouring Trinidad, in the early days carnival consisted mainly of fights between rival districts. The violence associated with carnival in the old days should not be too surprising. The people's existence was then one of daily violence and of dehumanization on a massive scale with no one around willing or capable of making a rational analysis of the situation so as to develop a coherent strategy to solve the basic problems of the community.

Alongside the carnival the calendar-stick fighting -- had developed. This "sport" is now dead. And the senselessness, and brutality that went with it were at once repulsive and tragic. It is better left dead.

Before Gairy came on the scene in 1951 the position of the labourers was tough. Hard pressed for time, they used whatever little time available for making their children; beating their drums, making "salaka"; dancing shango, "picquette" "praeng", fighting viciously at carnival; and pushing it all down with "oil down". Gairy set up his organisation, drawing considerable leadership support from the middle strata. However, his real power base was among the labourers. He at once made it clear that his aim was ultimately to wreck and completely destroy and to destroy for all time -- the powers of the old plantocracy. He also spoke of improving the conditions of the workers. How he actually went about it; what he actually achieved is a different matter.

The Gairy Government pursued a policy of land acquisition — leaving a large number of estates fragmented. They used that policy — notwithstanding their rhetoric about "land for the landless" — to attack the landowners, big or small, who proved more unwilling to co-operate with the dictatorship. Fact portions of land acquired from "A" were sold to "B" or "C" who — in some cases — had owned more land than "A" had prior to the acquisition and sale. Some of these acquired lands were held as state property to further boost the

powers of the dictatorship; others were sold willy-nilly with no plan, merely striving for political mileage.

And then the remaining holders of estates of any considerable size were too few to constitute an effective power block. The businessmen still remained. But they had not been doing as well as they would like. This was on account of the relatively poor performance of export agriculture after discounting for inflation. The fact is that prices of most basic commodities had more than doubled since the early days of the oil crisis. In order that export agriculture should maintain its position — in real terms — under such circumstances one or a combination of two things must happen.

- (1) *There must be an increase in prices received.*
- (2) *There must be an increase in production.*

But the combined effect had not been sufficient to offset that of inflation — although nutmegs, in particular, had shown substantial increases both in production and in terms of value.

Alongside and generally in competition with the traditional businessmen was an aggressive new group of businessmen. Generally they came from the middle strata, and typically they displayed that ambivalence towards society — commonly associated with the nouveau riche. They have as their power base some trading activity, or skill which they acquired mainly by correspondence courses and now practice independently of bosses having set up their own lucrative services.

Having made it up the hard way, "skrunting" for years, these men are jealous of their positions. They are anxious to assert themselves; they become members of prestigious clubs — Lions, Rotarians, Jaycees. With a sprinkling of doctors, lawyers, and the more liberal minded scions, of the old planocracy, these men assume the pretensions of societal exclusiveness. They would like to be effective as a class but

they are more likely to become a class apart with not much influence. The Grenadian society as at present constituted — with relatively primitive methods of production — is just not geared to the existence or development of class relationship, in the true sense, anyway.

By the time of independence complexion was no longer a passport to anything. It had been effectively replaced by the GULP membership card.

Nearly everything else remained the same. The labourers now enjoyed shorter working hours. At times, they suffered no working hours at all — they were still very poorly-fed — and housed worse for the increased numbers in their extended families. It is not true to say that they were hungry, though. That is not likely to happen for a very very long time to come.

So the condition of the artist and craftsman remained almost the same as before 1951. Today, he sees in the tourists his chief customer, if not his active patron. People, by and by, have come to accept the artist now though — even accord him some sort of prestige in the society.

But patrons in the true sense are non-existent. They are not easy to find; and they are not likely to be for a considerable period. But that must be the case. Money under Gairy was scarce. It all comes back to the performance of export agriculture. And, when we add on Gairy's mismanagement, his poor system of priorities, his propensity for spending on his "army" and on UFO's, the result is a picture which is at once alarming yet comical. People found it difficult to make ends meet. So they would not give any considerable support to the arts. In fact they could not.

In the meantime however, rum drinking increased markedly. Possibly people were attempting to drown their sorrows; possibly they were merely using their reduced purchasing power to obtain a greater quantity of the only available cheap pleasure — made cheaper by the dictator. The use or abuse of marijuana became more prevalent as well. It is a curious thing that the regime never attempted to do anything about marijuana.

The apparent absence of organisations like the Boys Scouts, Girl Guides, 4H Clubs — in the country districts at least — had removed a major opportunity for youths to develop certain qualities — personal discipline, leadership, character — which serve well in later life.

But that was only one side of it. In such groups people learn things, and skills can be discovered. Some people may have thought such to be colonial thinking. But until some superior alternative was brought forward, the regime should have stuck to those ways that have served others well.

## CHAPTER 6

### PARTY POLITICS

#### 1. OVERVIEW.

IN fairness to Gairy it must be stated that he is not alone guilty. Nor is his party to be the only one condemned. It is only sad that we in Grenada had permitted him to get away with so many little things until it was too late to contain the avalanche — that massive threat to public safety — that was to come. The people were doing the ostrich. We were nursing a cub, not caring to guard against the day of the tiger.

Euphemism and indulgence were the order of the day. When the secret police beat up a man, one heard that "police aids reasoned with a man". When the mongoose gang stole from a store one heard that "the mongoose gang liberated a few cases of whisky". When the criminal police forced an arrested man to eat cock roaches one heard that the poor chap "had roach and butter for dinner". When a man's head was flushed in a toilet one heard that "he had been born again".

This does not mean that the people as a whole were basically cruel or callous. People were frightened. To act in a serious manner with regard to such things would be to incur the wrath of the dictatorship. So people played along. Each man tried to save his own skin by minding his own P's and Q's, for a time. But inevitably the wheel of fate came spinning round. Thus the dictator was able to play one interest group against the other, always crying out about the jewel communists and the negative effect that they supposedly had on the economy in general and foreign investors in particular.

So applying this tactic of divide and rule the dictator seemed to have neutralized the opposition. To most people nothing could be done about the situation. Some — among them former top ranking members of the opposition — sought a peace with the dictatorship.

To most of the old guard nothing could be done about the situation.

People felt content to look the other way — in an effort



to save themselves. The gangrene had progressed alarmingly far! And the dictatorship could strike from any angle "land for the landless", motor car impounding, outright beatings, sackings as well as all the other minor refinements of terror at the disposal of the dictatorship. So the dictatorship carried its terror to higher and ever higher levels of contempt for the humanity of the people.

We, the people of Grenada are not the only ones guilty though. Caribbean Governments on the whole, that of Dr. Eric Williams of Trinidad and Tobago in particular stand condemned. Gairy was using all the resources of Government to support his police state, and to pay criminals to terrorize the law abiding citizens of Grenada. The Government of Dr. Eric Williams chose to give him financial assistance — at that crucial point, thus actively aiding and abetting Gairy to threaten the security of the public and to frustrate the just demands of the people. The P.R.G. should not hold itself liable for the repayment of that money.

Dr. Eric Williams simply regarded Gairy as his mercenary; Grenada on the other hand as his battle ground. The battle ground where his own contest with the progressive left wing forces — in Trinidad — would be fought! Gairy's mission was to show to the entire world that a Government in the Caribbean could not be kicked out, other than by elections or by a vote of no confidence. He accomplished that mission at the time.

In fact Dr. Eric Williams had subverted our democracy in order to show his own opponents the impossibility of toppling a Government by popular demonstrations — a possibility always lurking on the horizon of Trinidad politics. No one would ever be certain of what was agreed between the two Erics; no one would ever be quite clear as to their motives. But we are free to impute a motive in so far as it fits in with the prior and the subsequent behaviour of these two. This is especially justified when we consider the circumstances prevailing in both countries.

That there must have been criminal connivance between the two Governments must become quite clear if reasonable answers are given to certain pertinent questions. Why is it that Dr. Williams should give money to Gairy at a time when his Gairy's very mandate to govern was shaky and indeed highly questionable? Why is it that as soon as Gairy received that money he initiated a more systematic campaign of terror? Why is it that he then started to give more bad John talks?

And it is significant that only one Caribbean Head of Government had the decency to make his position clear. When Gairy approached that same Government for help there was no beating about the bush. Gairy was told no dice.

Meanwhile, certain other Caribbean Governments watched (our plight) with ill conceived satisfaction until March 13 1979 when they were galvanized into a howl of protest; and realizing the futility of their stand, because our very actions exposed their hypocrisy, they started asking for guarantees. What guarantees? Guarantees to be hounded by a band of sanctimonious ruffians posing as representatives of the people? They requested a return to constitutional rule. What constitution? The one that Gairy threw into the gutter? Where were all these people while all Grenada suffered? On the moon?

So by 1974 the methods of conventional politics had reached a stalemate. Gairy had not been able to checkmate the progressive forces. A round was gone; none of the contestants for power won much. But because Gairy was the incumbent, and because he was bent on a course of crimes, by not winning there and then the progressive forces lost a great deal. Grenada lost a great deal. A tame dog can become very cross after biting the first person. A Virgin can become a whore after the first time. Gairy saw what he could get away with. From then on it was no holes barred.

The other round was about to begin though. And from then on too, it was clear that a no win, no lose position was not acceptable. One could not remain indefinitely under same roof with a tiger that once tasted his blood. From then on the struggle would be waged on all planes and in every quarter. Economic, social, and psychological considerations would assume an importance equal to the fundamentally political nature of the struggle. The NJM would see the struggle in a global context and then take steps to internationalize the struggle; and the basic contest for political power would attain greater and greater heights as the consciousness of the people rise to embrace higher levels of psychological defiance in the face of the onslaught of Gairyism.

2.

## THE GRENADA UNITED LABOUR PARTY AND THE GRENADA NATIONAL PARTY.

It now remains for one to consider the actual workings and the interrelationships between the political parties in order to determine what factors gave rise to the particular set

of circumstances that lead to the revolution.

Gairicism developed on the two-fold foundation of a moralistic critique of the political economy of the old plantocracy and a labourist platform, involving a certain primitive doctrine of class conflict.

The GNP belonged to the colonial era, in the sense that it never recognised the need for a democratic transformation of society in order to bring about a new social order. The latter had come together at a time when Gairicism with its mass support among the workers and peasants was only just beginning to stake its claim to the people's mandate. Gairicism then was considered a radical movement. The GNP was the establishment's answer to this people oriented force; and the GNP remained a reactionary group, a backward conservative party, refusing to move with the times.

There was a certain perverse compatibility about all this. The GNP believed themselves to be advancing the cause of Nationalism at the very time they were being most anti-national. They proposed unitary statehood with Trinidad and Tobago and objected to participation in a federation of the "Little Eight". If the former had worked out Grenada would have been reduced to a position little better than a colony of Trinidad.

They made it their special business to attempt to block every move towards minimising the injustices of the existing economic arrangements, and the entrenched inequalities of the society.

The GULP from the outset was a party without democratic restraints. It claimed to represent the workers, but there was no room for popular consultation. Thus while Gairicism succeeded in accomplishing the personal mission of its founder (i.e. the destruction of the powers of the old plantocracy) it became the protector of a new type of exploiter. Further it in time emerged as the true embodiment of a type of bourgeois nationalism.

The whole phenomenon, while explicable by reference to the political structure of Gairy's movement was quite inconsistent with its original aims and beliefs. As time went on the political apparatus of the GULP was fused with the state bureaucracy. This was why Gairy could house his union (GMM&MWU) in what used to be the warden's office of Grenville while there was no library in the town.

The nature of the GNP also explains why they made no

big thing about that. This fusing of state and party allowed Gairy to create sinecures for purely political functionaries, grievance officers, farmer organisers, etc., whose sole job was to spread propaganda and to inform (bring news) on the public, at his Wednesday sessions. All this was held together — on the admission of many of his ex-ministers — by fear of the dictator and, let it be said, by fear of the mongoose gang. This was the scenario for the emergence of the police state.

The crisis of the GNP was precipitated by the collapse of an illusion — the illusion that Gairy would one day be satisfied and mellowed. All they wanted really was to keep in the running and be part of the action, since Gairy had come to represent basically the same type of interest as they did from the beginning. But the dictator would have none of it.

He would not keep anyone in the running. That was their business. And like all naughty little boys — that's what dictators are anyway — he wanted to run home with all the plums. He would not share any with the GNP.

This was the position of the GNP re independence. Hence their ambivalence. Hence their lying, hence their lack of resolution and, let me say too, their naked cowardice at the decisive moment of the struggle to stop Gairy in 1974.

The entire population came to recognise that there was no clear choice between the GULP and the GNP. And after their independence fiasco the GNP effectively lost all credibility.

Thus the GNP paid heavily for the fact that they had allowed themselves to be stranded with an anachronistic, inefficient, narrowly conservative political party which was out of touch with the basic vibrations of the people. It so happened that the very orientation of the GNP was to be their own worst enemy.

So Gairy and his band of criminals continued on their merry way, raping the country and mortgaging the future while the official (GNP) opposition was helpless to cope. In fact that group of men, more interested in form, formalities, procedure and appearances were no match for Gairy in the political arena. So many people wanted freedom; but so few were resolved to take that freedom. When this is coupled with the unpreparedness of the GNP, their lack of rapport at the grass roots level, and their repeated displays of ineptitude they were immediately ruled out as a vital force for liberation. Their style was one tailored for failure.

To add insult to injury, after the people gave a mandate to the People's Alliance, the GNP started playing hankie-pankie with Gairy. They started meeting — secretly with Gairy — without prior consultation with the leader of the opposition. They allowed Gairy to play divide and rule. It is important to state though that comrade Norris Bain never fell for that trap. That is why Gairy chose not to invite the comrade to his fake dialogues.

### 3. GRENADA UNITED LABOUR PARTY AND THE NEW JEWEL MOVEMENT

By the late 60's there were a significant number of people who could identify with neither the GULP nor the GNP. In response to their need for representation a number of pressure groups emerged. Most important among these were Civil Liberties Association (CLA) — shortlived — Movement for Assemblies of the People (MAP), and Joint Endeavour for Welfare Education and Liberation.

The members of CLA were mostly students and young graduates. They confined themselves to indoor meetings in the nature of a select intellectual group — not unlike the early Jacobins. In this sense they were the spiritual ancestors of MAP. But there was a system whereby CLA held their meetings in various parishes.

MAP was a St. George's oriented group — mostly young people, with a sprinkling of graduates. But its membership included a number of lawyers. These men moved about the country in connection with their work in the courts. Their profession brought them into contact with people from all walks of life. They got used to talking to the people about things that mattered. And they listened to the people as well. They came into contact with the people at the level of harsh reality.

They understood the people. They saw clearly the poverty of the people. In time it was these men who became the theoreticians of MAP, and the spiritual heirs to the struggles of Marryshow — a town dweller with a broad and enlightened understanding of the problems of the people.

JEWEL was formed in 'Vincennes, St. David's by a group of young people. Notable among its founders were Union Whiteman and Teddy Victor. The membership were more at the grass roots level — unemployed, underprivileged, no high level of formal education.

However, like the other two (CLA AND MAP) they had been influenced by the concepts of Black Power ideology and the wave of black consciousness, and anti-imperialism that swept the Caribbean in the late 60's and early 70's. Possibly the level of their awakening may have been higher for the material conditions of their existence and for the extent of their personal privations. No wonder unlike the other two groups they formed a co-op to rear chickens and to do some farming from the outset.

Be that as it may, one thing is certain. From the outset they saw the problem of their liberation in terms of Violence. They never thought of the solution except in terms of violence. This set them apart. They recognised the necessity to take back that which was rightly theirs.

But the people as a whole did not take them seriously at the beginning. This was partly because of their extreme militancy — so considered — at the time; partly because they did not articulate their position in a sufficiently lucid form; and partly too because of snob values directed against these "drop outs" who in fact were themselves generally in need of help. They taught self reliance and tried to practice it. But the people at the time asked the backward question "What can the JEWEL do for me? These boys have not'ing".

However, in time certain things became clear about MAP and JEWEL. They had radical ideas about the society; in fact they saw society in the same light. For their reforms would not be sufficient. They sought a radical restructuring of the very mechanisms of society. It soon became clear too, that MAP and JEWEL were taking up the same issues — Lord Brownlow affair, the murder of Jeremiah Richardson etc. On these problems they held similar views — views which had strong roots in traditional populist thought. But when they challenged the dictator he brought out his guns and cried "communists". More and more their efforts were co-ordinated and eventually the New Jewel Movement (NJM) was born on 11th March, 1973.

So the NJM evolved in response to a genuine need. A need arising out of the vacuum left by the failure of Gairyism to fulfil the aspirations of 1951. From very early the NJM projected a broad people oriented programme and organised along socialist lines with cell groups in various villages.

This novel system of political organisation struck the imagination of the youths. The latter — the first torch-bearers

of the NJM — were soon ready to rap to the farm workers, the fisherman, the peasant, the students about the new message — a message which emphasised the oneness of the people.

Consequently, that new message was bound to come into conflict with the gospel of Gairyism. Gairyism emphasised the differences between the classes that the dictator ascribed to the society. Gairyism, at the start, was concerned with representing a particular class, and that class alone. But from the start it seemed clear that NJM was not interested in representing a particular class.

That point is crucial to an understanding of the later successes of the NJM. They — unlike Gairy — quite rightly recognised that the society was not made up of rigidly defined classes. The political economy of Grenada did not permit the existence or the emergence of classes, in the true sense of the word, anyway.

They recognised the highly stratified nature of the society; and set about to weld the various groups together, emphasising our common heritage, our common humanity; and paramount; our common need to stick together and to fight imperialism, which kept all of us oppressed and exploited.

As a result the NJM could speak to the farmers on the role of Geest Industries in terms of dollars and cents — language that made sense to the farmers — to bring home to them the exploitative nature of imperialism. The NJM could back the Technical and Allied Workers' Union (TAWU) in their just claims against the Grenada Electricity Company (GEC) or the Telephone Company. They could also back the Civil Service Association (CSA) as well as the Bank and General Workers' Union — whenever the need arises.

They could also take very strong objection to the exorbitant salaries — salaries out of all proportions to considerations of the national economy — paid to ex-patriate employees of GEC. And they could equally well articulate the objections of the whole people when confronted by exorbitant rates demanded for electricity and for telephone. But Gairyism could do none of these things.

Gairyism could think only in terms of the farm workers, and even they suffered at the hands of the dictatorship. They paid their union dues; but received nothing in return. Gairy simply twisted the facts of history and talked again and again, about what he had done for the people in 1951. He never recognised the vital importance of the people's own struggle of 1951.

He merely reiterated his claim to their support. He acted as though they had owed him something. Down to the last he never behaved as though the people's support was conditional on his ability to carry out the mandate of the 70's — a new mandate with new and more complex parameters.

In these circumstances, Gairyism made things easy for the NJM. Increasingly, the NJM spoke out and showed up the decadence of Gairyism. Increasingly too, the dictatorship blamed "the Jewel Communists" for our various problems — problems associated basically with the ineptitude and the corruption of the dictatorship. In any case it was ludicrous to hear a Government confess its impotence to achieve anything because of the activities of a "handful of upstarts" in one outburst, and the next moment to boast of its heavy parliamentary majority and of continued support among the people.

The NJM was not even represented in Parliament at the time the dictator started making his wild accusations. Not a single act of arson could be ascribed to the group. The dictator made various efforts to sue the NJM for libel or for slander. However, his legal advisers always warned him that the impossibility of proving his point in Court was quite remote. So to silence this organ of the people other means had to be used.

The unrealistic nature of intelligence concerning the strength of NJM — until it was too late to act reasonably — was a characteristic of the dictatorship. None of Gairy's lieutenants could face him with information that support was lessening. Such a statement would be considered an affront — a veritable insult — to the dictator. His party had no organisation. It was centralised. All praise for achievements were confined to the dictator.

So obviously if support was dwindling, it was the dictator's fault. But to save his own face some heads would have to roll; and since he was always thrilled by control, he would use such a situation as an excuse to extend and to tighten his own personal control on the reigns. As a result his close aids developed the habit of telling him what they thought he would like to hear — rather than face his wrath. So the dictator confidently stated that the Jewel of itself had no real support, that it was the same old coalition of the fifties who had come out against his Government. He professed not to be afraid of them; he had already whipped them — again and again — at the polls; he would do it again — with the help of God. They could not win; they were just bad losers. What

an illusion!

But as time went on and the people started openly condemning the GNP as well as the GULP dictatorship, and aligning themselves more and more firmly behind the NJM, the dictator himself had to take stock.

So the dictator concentrated all his fire power on the NJM. From that time on all his efforts would be directed towards breaking the hold of the "Jewel boys". And just like Nixon in his last days was overwhelmed by the effects of Watergate Gairy too was overwhelmed by his own effort to retain power in the face of the well co-ordinated onslaught of the revolutionary forces under the leadership of the NJM vanguard. Government was at a standstill.

The hounding of the NJM was then extended to embrace even those who were mere sympathisers without playing any active role within the NJM organisation. The Newspaper Act, that piece of backward legislation was introduced with the chief aim of blocking the NJM weekly publication. "The New Jewel". What amounted to a ban on the use of public address systems applied to the NJM but did not apply to the GNP. The dictatorship took every opportunity to freighten all Jewels — as the dictatorship referred to members and supporters of NJM, and to threaten the personal safety of the "Jewel Boys" as the backward elements came to refer to the NJM leadership.

Meantime the position became clearer as the NJM continued to articulate the frustrations of the people — the terror notwithstanding. What should have been the instrument of the people's liberation had indeed become the refuge of the scoundrel.

Someone else had to take up the torch and light the way to freedom. The NJM was prepared, willing and able. The NJM then, were the rightful heirs to the political struggles of 1951. By 1977, the enormous gains of the NJM could not be dismissed. Neither could the dictator pretend that his position was any longer secure. The contest for control of the political processes was then in its twilight stages. It could not continue much longer. Something had to happen.

The two groups could not live together. One had to extinguish the other. Their differences were too fundamental. Ideology was at the bottom of those differences all along. But the dictatorship saw to it that co-existence was impossible. And as differences tended to become more clearly defined the dictatorship sought more and more to isolate the NJM. Every effort

was made to silence the NJM.

The dictatorship saw to it that the NJM was not allowed any platform to air their views, unmolested. Not even contributions in parliament by NJM escaped the onslaught. An announcer would paraphrase such contributions — quite often omitting the real substance. Then the Government Ministers voice would come over the air waves. The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) was due to meet in Trinidad in 1978.

Gairy planned to deny the NJM such a vital platform. This is because he knew that Parliament was subverted. He knew that he had belittled the office of the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and that he had embarrassed and humiliated the Speaker — making it difficult for the Speaker to guide debates. Gairy knew that all this would be exposed. And Gairy knew too that this would help to internationalize the struggle further. So he decided not to include any NJM member in the Grenada delegation.

But because the NJM had taken steps to internationalize the struggle; because the NJM had already established fraternal relations with the more progressive Governments and political parties in the region, it was easy to convey the facts of our political conditions to the conference.

The CPA is a body not geared to partisan politics. Its conferences are not intended to present the views of a particular political group. So delegations are made up to include not only members from Government's side but also members from the opposition parties.

A howl of protest was raised. By his obsession with the idea of silencing the NJM, the dictator had unwittingly dramatised the extent of the repression under which the NJM had to operate.

There was no turning back. The forces set in motion was bound to lead to a contest of arms. That this was the only outcome was clear to all who had eyes to see and ears to hear. It was only a question of exactly when the clash would come.

Gairy had changed the name of his Union from the Grenada Manual & Mental Workers' Union (GMM&WU) to the Grenada Manual, Maritime & Intellectual Workers' Union (GMM & IWU). This signalled the ushering in of steps to institutionalize the Union as a full fledged arm of Gairy's authoritarian apparatus.

He began to poach on the other Unions. He also stepped up the harassment of the Unions. In order to obtain employment on any of the Government farms or on any Government controlled projects one had to join Gairy's Union, (GMM& IWU)

Even Nurses aids and student nurses had to comply. And it was the NJM that stood behind the Unions to speak out on the worker's right to be represented by the Union of his/her choice.

Traditionally, Gairy's support came mainly from the Agricultural workers, and from the unskilled workers. But that group too was feeling the pinch of Gairyism. Real wages were being reduced by galloping inflation, and by sundry deductions — union dues etc. Free labour, and "self help" Gairy style were becoming practically obligatory.

Workers, particularly the politically conscious workers, were dismissed on trifling pretexts, and often with no pretext at all. Some complained, in secret, out of shame or fear or both, but maintained their love for, and their loyalty to Gairy. Others remained neutral. Yet others turned to NJM — with its increasingly popular appeal as the defender of the poor, and the natural home of those willing to struggle.

The young people became more and more alienated by Gairyism. Large numbers resorted to smoking marijuana. Defiantly flouting convention and all traditional Christian propriety of their parents they formed an eccentric group. Generally, they were growing their beards and their hair longer, and dirty too. They were wearing their clothes — whatever that was — dirtier too, washing less and smoking more, talking socialism, reading and carousing, and above all studiously ignoring organised society.

They were generally rude, more often than not drugged, ill-clad, malodorous, immodest, iconoclastic.

Yet all this had a curious logic of its own — to the aware observer. There were parallel changes at other levels in the society. People were abandoning conventional British clothes and donning instead the twentieth century equivalent of the bush jacket, and creation based on the African dashiki or Nehru jacket.

Some of these alienated youths took the line of least resistance; others decided to join the struggle for freedom.

The outlook of the former was well expressed by one of them who said that once he had smoked enough (marijuana)

na) the affairs of the world was of no more importance "than a pile of shit". The latter found a natural home, and a comfortably welcome in the NJM. This is not to say that the NJM was made up of society drop outs — as Gairy repeatedly charged — or was tailor made for them. Here we must distinguish between the society drop out who realises that he is a failure, and the individual who analyses the society, finds it wanting, rejects its premises and decides to destroy its very foundations. There is a very fundamental difference between these two. The latter is a revolutionary.

The drop out falls by the wayside, has no further will to struggle — despondent, a broken reed, sad commentary on the humanity of the whole people. He is a parasite. Like the broken reed that he is, he is buffeted on the seas of events. He lacks direction. He wants to be in the running but he does not want to go through the rigours, and the discipline of training and hard work.

He may want freedom but he does not accept the consequences. He does not understand the basic necessity to create an efficient fighting machine to take that freedom. He falls into a state of inferiority and dependence — a casualty of cultural imperialism. He grows his locks. He curses Babylon; and listens to Bob Marley "The Rasta Masta"; but he steals leaders not excluded — from the poor and his basic aspirations still remain those of the society.

In his ganja dreams he sees himself with access to all the perks that society can give, and driving around in a fancy, big car. He is no use to the society from which he has opted to drop out. He is of still less use to the revolution. He wants to live a life in defiance of natural laws. As our people say: "He wants to live light and weigh heavy". He is a casualty of Gairyism.

But this type of casualty deserves our pity only. There is very little that one can do for him in the early stages of the revolution anyway. But he must cause us concern because he is a breathing testimony of one of the greatest crimes of Gairyism. Above all he is an opportunist. He is not a Rasta.

On the other hand his counterpart is a revolutionary. In his dreams he saw himself gun in hand, a man willing to defend his manhood, and to stake his claim for a place in sun. So these youths were no mere poseurs, and there was nothing artificial or strange about their adoption of the simple natural ideals that Rastafarianism taught. In poverty they found

their own integrity, and discovered their destiny. It was inextricably tied to that of the progressive forces.

So Gairy used his criminal elements in the police to brutalize members of the cult, while at the same time trying, to use opportunists — the drop outs — among them to arrange meetings with them.

So the NJM made inroads among Gairy's traditional supporters and he could not attract the young. Poor people found themselves involved in an unequal struggle for existence in a world of conspicuous, and superfluous consumption by the few. And they resented it.

It was easy therefore to arouse ideological passions among such people. And the NJM understood the significance of that condition.

But the dictatorship would do nothing to alleviate the hardships and the privations of the poor. Instead repression was increased; sackings and provocations were stepped up. Threats were issued to the Jewel. The dictator boasted of his guns and his readiness to deal with the Jewel. He wanted confrontation.

Gairy in his final days devoted so much time to dealing with the Jewel that Government had little time left to attend to other matters. He could not open his mouth without mentioning the "Jewel Communists".

Meantime unemployment rose higher and higher. The various commodity monopolists profiteered shamelessly. Bubble and outright — corruption flourished, with materials never reaching their intended destination, and materials being spirited away from Government projects on a regular basis. And it was only necessary to raise the cry of freedom to find masses of youths and unemployed take up what available arms.

The remaining supporters of Gairy were labouring under a heavy strain. They were not going to risk anything for him. His secret police, his green beast army, his mongoose gang, his criminal elements in the police force — all paramilitary props to a dying dictatorship — were no match for the well disciplined forces of the revolution.

These (the Gairy paramilitary) were for the most part a blood thirsty hooligan rabble, and together that mob becomes a many headed monster, constituting a severe threat to public safety. But individually you will find no greater coward. Many people were surprised at seeing these once big bad johns drop their guns and run like hell at the first sound

of "ho-dowe".

And the NJM sized up the position and sent out the Revolutionary call to which the masses responded whole heartedly.

#### 4. GNP AND NJM

From what has been said so far it should be clear that the GNP was a party organised from the top down. Equally it is true that the opposite is the case with the NJM.

But there is this one absolute and crucial difference between the NJM and the GNP. The NJM politics were rooted in ideological considerations. This new NJM approach made the philosophical do's and don'ts of the GNP seem uninspiring, work-a-day stuff. This meant that the NJM must have come into conflict with the GNP.

In point of fact the NJM hit out at speculation and exploitation. They promised stabilized prices, limited profits and the introduction of state banks and low interest agricultural credits to farmers. All this, of course, constituted a direct challenge to the role of the GNP. After all, the GNP was the big shot party, the party of the traditional businessmen. It was the party of the privileged, who would quite naturally love to retain their positions of privilege, and to expand and perpetuate their privileges.

The GNP soon came to regard the NJM as the machine to be used to overthrow Gairyism. But the NJM saw itself in a different light. Comrade Maurice Bishop was not going to be anybody's-Kerensky.

Worst yet he had no intention of becoming an Allende to any local Pinochet. The NJM accordingly was not a party of overthrowers — mere reactionary insurgents. Comrade Bishop rightly deduced that the GNP saw Gairy as a ferocious beast and the NJM as a hound; a hound to be used in cornering the beast; a hound to face all of the fury, and to receive all of the blows and the scratches of the beast, and then to be put gently out of its pains after the beast had been overpowered.

This was not at all an encouraging prospect, so he proposed to be the hunter himself, not one of the dogs. The NJM then was a revolutionary party — dedicated to revolutionary changes, changes which would see to it as Brother Bishop is so fond of quoting that: "The time has come when justice



must come to the poor.....and the meek must inherit earth".

Herein lies the problem of the GNP in the period immediately following the overthrow. They were merely interested in a palace type coup — a changing of the guard and business more or less as usual. And this problem is still present. The truth is that the GNP does in fact support the overthrow of Gairyism on March 13, 1979.

They may even be labouring under the illusion that they support "the Revolution" which went through all its stages from start to finish on March 13. But they certainly do not support the revolutionary processes which started with the murder of Jeremiah Richardson, and which must continue long after the March 13th, milestone has been passed. Maybe their problem is one of conception or point of view.

There is no question they reject the barbarism, the banditization of politics, the naked graft and corruption, the bubul and victimization of Gairyism. But in its place they would have exploitation of the masses — as usual — only minus the cruelty, but crudely callous all the same, and all very nice and legal. It was to throw out six and put in half-a-dozen.

They would like to do the same thing as Gairy after Gairy was overthrown — only they would do it more sophisticated, less clumsily, more subtle, covert, more acceptable to their sensibilities and their concept of themselves as upright and honest men.

They were puzzled when the People's Revolutionary Government (PRG), accused them of disloyalty and of acts of destabilisation against the Revolution. They screamed out their loyalty to the Revolution. But this too is not surprising.

One only has to remember the problems in getting the "People's Alliance" going, and the petty squabbles over sharing arrangements for seats; seats which the GNP could not and must have known that they could not win in any case. It was clear that the GNP held a dichotomous position.

On the one hand they wanted Gairy out badly. But they had done no meaningful political work and knew that they could not win without the NJM. On the other hand they displayed great arrogance from the beginning, lecturing the NJM leadership, instructing on this and that, attempting to smash the NJM by singling out individuals for direct contact. They insisted on foisting on the people men who had

lost their names — for one reason or the other. Further, in a remarkable display of backwardness and political ineptitude the GNP chose to attack the NJM, for its policies re banking and Insurance, the formation of a National Import Board — policies which were in fact popular with the ordinary people.

It became clear that the GNP were playing for a stalemate if they could not gain the upper hand in an Alliance Government. The relationship between the GNP and the NJM as members of the People's Alliance was marred by this dilemma.

Today, the chief losers in Revolutionary Grenada are the ones who lose the chance to underpay their workers and to overcharge their customers. To the extent that a man wants to retain such a manifestly unjust relationship he can not make peace with the Revolution. To the extent that known oppressors and exploiters of the people claim to support the Revolution while hoping to maintain the iniquitous relationship they do not understand the revolution.

To the extent that the GNP represents and crystalises the will of these people it will never make peace with the revolution. It cannot. Its very raison d'être precludes such a move.

When they say that they support the revolution but we see that their actions contradict their words we must understand that they are suffering from a confusion. They are mixing up the terms Revolution and overthrow.

As far as they are concerned a Revolution occurred in Grenada on March 13th. As far as they are concerned getting rid of Gairy, their arch enemy, marked the completion, the total fulfillment of the Revolutionary process in Grenada. That is why many of their staunchest supporters came out to join in the Patriotic effort to free Grenada of Gairyism. That is why they later on cried foul, and filled with self righteous indignation they started calling for elections, complaining of curtailment of freedom, wailing about assumed violations of human rights and demanding assurances, and in a most unpatriotic display set about to destabilize the Revolution at a time when we the people saw the struggle in quite different terms.

Ordinary people were not concerned with elections. On the contrary, we quite rightly felt that we had an election on March 13th — free and fair. An oppressed people, with only courage and a desire for freedom, with all the odds against them, kicking out a tyrant and asserting their humanity in a



democratic uprising and led by their natural leaders cannot be concerned about constitutional niceties; and should not be accused of unconstitutional conduct.

Hence our concept of March 13th as free and fair elections. There was no opportunity for anyone to stuff a ballot box. There was no opportunity to terrify a man about his life or livelihood. It was not a case of a few hooligans holding guns. It was gun for gun, matching the dictator and outmaneuvering him. People were prepared to use their own blood to make an "X" on March 13th. And ordinary people saw March 13th as a major milestone in an ongoing Revolutionary process — not as the Revolution.

People do not have elections as the No. 1 priority. In fact it is widely felt that the PRG must make sure and take steps to consolidate the gains of the Revolution and to socialize the economy as a precondition to any form of election. People did not take up arms on March 13th so that agents of imperialism — local servants of foreign Governments — would malign their courageous leaders in an election campaign that can only be fratricidal and extremely counterproductive, in real terms, if we are to judge by what went on before in the name of free and fair elections.

But the high comedy of this state of affairs is that when the GNP started abusing the right to use loud speakers, when they started demanding the release of the mongoose gang, when they started attacking our relationship with Cuba, our only helper at a most delicate time of need, and we said we did not want to hear, they demanded that the PRG — in effort — bound us to listen to their unpatriotic utterances.

They said — echoing days of Gairyism — that thugs and hooligans broke up their meetings. I do not think that anyone would call me a hooligan. But after hearing the unpatriotic and treasonous statements in the Grenville market square I became very angry and I left. I was glad to hear that later on the people put a stop to this shameful display of unpatriotism. And I know that quite a lot of these people would take very serious objections to being called young thugs and hooligans.

The GNP together with their acolytes, the United People's Party (UPP), behaved as surrogates for the interests of imperialism, and their attitudes and policies echoed those of the Capitol. On the other hand the NJM gradually emerged as a socialist party, bent primarily on breaking the foreign hold on the economy of the country. The GNP interpreted this to mean the NJM leadership were mere torchbearers of

the Kremlin. So the GNP started calling on the NJM to make a public statement to the contrary and to give assurances. Such a statement did not come, and the GNP riposted by holding a series of meetings right around the country to spread the communist bogey.

At the same time a campaign was waged to show how impossible it was for any communist party to succeed in Grenada. I recall an article in which the author with great erudition traced the history of various communist countries to show how dissimilar our history was to that of those countries, in the anti-communist period.

In effect he tried to convince all and sundry that the NJM politics were tailor made for failure, and that the NJM would be considered heretics in communist circles. For Comrade Bishop walked where traditional Communist revolutionaries feared to tread, but his heresy had the genius of simplicity. Instead of basing revolution on the agricultural or other oppressed worker, he based it on the oppression suffered in common by all the people and meted out by Gairy, actively aided and abetted by the imperialists.

Instead of fighting for wages and better working conditions he promised a "New and Just Society" and to "Let those who labour hold the reign"

And instead of taking the beaten track followed by socialist revolutionaries he read Fanon, he studied the exploits of our hero, Julien Fedon and the politics of Donovan and Marryshow, and he put what he learned from them into practice. So our revolution is in a class by itself. It is Grenadian.

Today the destabilisers prattle and complain about our growing ties and friendship with Cuba. They are merely playing their traditional roles. In the wake of March 13th, a call was made to certain countries for aid: military, to defend the country against possible mercenary attack; economic to rescue the country from the after effects of Gairyism. Our powerful and rich friend America, guided by a man who talks of human rights and carries a Bible could only respond by offering a few \$5,000 projects here and there. Only one country responded with a remarkable display of altruism: Cuba.

And this altruism continues, but the GNP elements still ask at what price?

## 6 THE PEOPLE'S ALLIANCE

It is now left to make a brief comment on the Alliance and the United People's Party (UPP). In the first place; it must be understood that the UPP had set for itself goals that were fundamentally the same as those of the GNP. What then was the *raison d'être* of the UPP as a separate political group? Why couldn't its members be assimilated by the GNP?

To be blunt the existence of the UPP was in part a way of satisfying the egos of certain men. It was formed in part too because its founders differed with the GNP on procedural matters. Furthermore a number of UPP founder members had been long-standing members of the GULP. These — for one reason or another — could no longer remain in the GULP. But having fought the GNP for so long — and so dirty these men could not bring themselves to join the GNP.

It must be remembered that the GNP was an old guard answer to Gairyism. It may be truly said that the GNP leadership comprised the political elders of the far right. These men formed an ultra conservative group. Their philosophy was more akin to that of the Republicans than to that of the Democrats in the USA. Further, they jealously guarded their positions in the party hierarchy, and their ideas and methods. Consequently, there was no place for a Winston Whyte in the GNP hierarchy.

The UPP was proposing a form of enlightened capitalism, the capitalism that realises that it must at least appease the workers. Nevertheless, it still aims to downpress the workers and to keep them out of the mainstream of the social, economic and political life of the nation. It is an opiate — a sham. Peoples' capitalism they called it.

The idea was to give the ordinary worker the opportunity to purchase a few shares, thus giving him a false opinion of himself and of his own position in the scheme of exploitation. Having access to the crumbs, off the capitalist table, the more backward workers — although equally exploited and oppressed — quite falsely see themselves as budding capitalists. These would then fight like hell to defend their own oppression and exploitation. But the GNP saw things differently on this score.

The UPP also provided a home for GULP members who readily gathered around the suave and charming Mr. Whyte. He was youthful, a brilliant speaker, and one who had influential contacts with certain local and foreign capitalist interest

quite a useful thing in terms of financing an election campaign. But with the petulance of youth, he was eager to try out new methods. And with his years of tutelage under Gairy he got to like action.

The GNP would be too dead for him. But later on these two which could well have been political pluses under different circumstances were to cost him the political leadership of his party.

When the people started calling for an alliance to stop Gairy in the 1976 elections it was not difficult for the GNP and the UPP to link up. They were travelling in the same direction all along. They had the same destination any way.

But if the NJM would become a party to any Alliance agreement, there would have to be some give and take. The NJM and the GNP — UPP grouping were already on a collision course. The former were as different from the latter grouping as night is from day. They were held together only by a desire to stop Gairy. To expect that Alliance to work was just as if one expected water to run up a hill.

The structures — whatever there were — of GNP and UPP, their goals, their methods of operation were so different from those of the NJM that integration was out of the question. A dog fight ensued for constituencies, the dictator and his supporters viewing all this with great satisfaction. Mr. Blaize, after the election was bold enough to challenge the acknowledged leader of the Peoples' Alliance. He staked his claim to be leader of the Opposition. And from after the election its just constant wrangling. To ordinary people it was the case of the Alliance that never was.

So the NJM had to fight on alone. At one period the NJM had to put up a bigger battle against the GNP/UPP grouping than against the GULP.

## CHAPTER 7

### BEYOND THE BALLOT BOX

DURING the decades of the fifties and sixties when one spoke of dictatorship it was easy to think of Nazi Germany and Adolph Hitler. Tyranny in its naked form could at that time be safely connected with Stalin and the notorious KGB. When one spoke of strongman rule, coups and lawlessness Latin America came to mind.

By the closing years of the sixties Papa Doc — Francois Duvalier of Haiti was singled out for his ton ton macoutes, his ruthlessness, his personal total control. In short it was as though the man owned Haiti — lock, stock and people. His country along with certain countries in Africa were singled out for backwardness.

However during the decade of the seventies, our own English Speaking Caribbean leaders have been displaying the propensity to copy the methods of these notorious rulers. There have been varying levels of success in that direction among all the leaders. But it was the destiny of Eric Gairy to combine all the above traits and to flaunt them in the most overt manner possible.

His reliance on force was one thing. The people had come to accept this. However, the source of the force had created quite serious opposition to Gairy, both at home and in the rest of the Caribbean. The dreaded secret police lost no time in making themselves clear and soon enough became quite notorious. They represented a sort of semi-personal bodyguard for Gairy. He has been quoted as saying that he had more confidence in them than in the Royal Grenada Police. In times of increased opposition activity he seldom moved about the country without them. These men too were deployed to guard the properties of his leading supporters throughout the island.

The secret police were paid out of public funds of course. However they were appointed and disbanded on an ad hoc basis. More and more they came to resemble a sort of reserve band of armed retainers — always at Gair's disposal.

Their chief function was to spread terror among his opponents. They beat up and torture people. They frightened the regular police.

And, let us be clear too, their looting did not start on 21st January, 1974. It was their practice to demand goods or services from people and refuse to pay. There was a particular one whose habit was to take the petrol from other people's cars in bright day-light in the open town.

But this should not be surprising. As a rule the secret police were criminals.

In the light of the foregoing it is incorrect to say that Gairy caused them to do their looting, and to make that the crucial issue of the events on Bloody Monday. The fact is that these people had displayed the propensity in varying degrees before. He merely took the opportunity to shock the business community. And to use his own terminology "forest tigers" should be kept firmly in the forests or be caged.

The crime here is that he chose to release these blood thirsty "tigers" on the population. For those crimes of his "tigers" would not have been committed in the absence of protection by and active direction from a political directorate.

That he chose such a means — his "forest tigers" — instead of the hustings in order to buttress his position was to go beyond the ballot box.

However, in passing, it is important to note that many simple folk had been beaten, robbed, tortured and brutally mal-treated by the same secret police before January 21, 1974. But it is very significant that when Gairy interfered with big shots and their business places the whole world was aroused. For one thing 21st, January 1974 represented a direct attack on the capitalist interests. It was indeed a chastisement meted to these people by their own guardian.

Perhaps these people had thought that it could not happen to them. So in typical snug bourgeois style they had minded their own affairs. But they got a lesson on Bloody Monday. We must all remember that lesson well. They who take pride in minding their own business and confine their efforts wholly and solely to their private affairs are unmindful of a vital fact. In the long run, self interest is inseparable from the interest of the rest of the community. Further, the well being of a given individual depends upon the welfare of all; and this welfare is made possible only by maintenance of a

healthy, social and economic structure within the State.

The citizens were bullied and their substance plundered by the Government, in so many ways. "Land for the landless" meant seizure of lands belonging to prominent members and supporters of the Opposition. Civil Servants were being bullied and frightened, terrorized and sacked with very little or no redress. People were arrested by the illiterate buffons in Gairy's criminal gang — hand picked and literally as well as liberally inflicted on the regular police force, in an effort to institutionalize their activities. And then — in front of some Magistrates — they faced the prospects of uncertain justice administered with politics in mind.

Government parliamentarians threatened people in all sorts of ways, and in time, that, too, because a standard practical joke. All these went beyond the ballot box to ensure GULP success via the ballot box.

People became afraid to stand up, not because they lacked courage, or understanding but because many of those who chose to, did, in real terms, achieve nothing and ended as casualties of Gairyism. Many such people became laughing stocks, with no where to turn.

Gairy did not just get up one morning and decide to brutalize people or to plunder the country. It came about after a long series of escalatory moves against the people as a whole. Many people did not realise it at first. Some people too, gave all types of special reasons for not getting themselves mixed up in the earlier moves to stop Gairy. Among those, religion non-involvement in politics as a special personal principle were handy excuses.

, But all this was simply to conceal their own special personal weaknesses, and let it be said too, their personal greed. Their anxieties over promotion; their lack of any form of personal integrity or commitment to the national interest could be easily laid bare in the context of their repeated demonstrations of opportunism and their demonstrable lack of public spiritedness throughout the struggle to get rid of Gairy and give a little hope to our people.

But Gairy understood all this quite well and decided to go further and further beyond the ballot box. So his criminal police — robustly assisted by his experienced secret police — took on the leadership of the New Jewel Movement in what the then Premier chose to describe as a 'scuffle'. The results of that 'scuffle' were appalling. However, on January 21,

1974, everyone saw why Gairy and his followers thought it fit to describe the former incident as a 'scuffle'.

The traitor could go so far only because those who were in a position to stop him had no commitment to the country. They were spongers — just as Gairy. Only, he would indulge in open banditry; but they perferred fiscal measures and other policies designed to place certain constraints on the economy and upon the society as a whole in order to keep the people in subjection and to accomplish their perverted goals.

So a confused situation existed. But one thing was clear. There is a thing called basic decency, and this was not present in the Gairy party.

In Trinidad for instance there are many political parties. These remain merely hostile political parties. But they recognise the right of each to function. However, the GULP was not just another political party. Essentially it was a hostile, and weaponized political principle.

It was hell bent on extermination of opposing elements. It was concerned with the total, complete silencing of voices of dissent. It 'will not tolerate any utterance' of a differing view. It could not. Its very nature, composition and final objective did not permit any form of tolerance whatever.

Some people — especially supporters of the GNP — condemned the GULP for its waywardness and indiscipline in matters concerning the economy and finance. Corruption was ever present and always evoked complaint. These are o.k., because they were true. But there is something more crucial to an understanding of the evil of Gairyism.

The evil of Gairyism is not what Gairyism has done in a material sense — to all the people of Grenada either. Let us examine what Gairyism has done first of all to its own adherents. It has given them HATE as their chief motive force. The chief expression of this, their motive force, was violence. Gairyism had warped the minds of its supporters. It had caused them to surrender their ability to think and prevented them from behaving as ordinary, normal human beings. It had forced them to relinquish all those qualities through which man could define his own humanity in a meaningful way.

To achieve all this it had first to take steps to keep them in a state of subjection, insecurity, and backwardness.

This their ideology of HATE was quite a serious matter. It was vital to the existence of the GULP. It taught the work-

er to hate the employer; it taught the landless to hate the landed. It taught the homeless to hate the sheltered. It taught the uneducated to hate the educated; to despise education and to ascribe to our high schools and to higher learning all our society's baser characteristics — characteristics which in fact they must reflect, but obviously have not caused.

There is nothing really wrong about this anti big man side of his politics. What is bad is that it was steeped in hate, and it had no scientific foundation. For instance it made no distinction between the progressive, wealthy, and the corrupt.

Having successfully waged psychological war on its own partisans and subdued them Gairyism was then in a position to wage war on the entire population. Nothing in 20th century Grenadian experience — not even 1951 — included all the brutality, such gross cruelty, nor the open disregard for law, and contempt for justice that marked the reign of terror under Gairy's direction.

Gairyism set about its job, and under the guise of defense of nationalism and independence it declared war to perpetuate itself. In this context it is a pity that the politically inept opposition should talk the way they did. These people had said — in effect anyway — that we did not want independence under Gairy. How naive? And then they started to make noise. To take them at their word it meant as far as they were concerned Gairy was alright once we were not independent.

They had to be silly to expect the British Government to heed such an argument. The fact is that getting rid of Gairy, and independence for Grenada were two separate issues. They acted as though they believed that independence was granted to Gairy and not to Grenada. Incidentally Gairy's behaviour was as though he believed that Independence was granted to him. This can well serve to show how very successful Gairyism was not only via bullying people but also in distorting the mind.

The GULP had identified Grenada and God with Gairy by some strange twist of the mind. The GULP then proceeded to make it plain that it could not feel secure until no other creed existed except the particular one approved by the one 'sent by God to lead this land of ours.'

So the country was conquered and subjugated by the forces of reaction. But the NJM continued to resist. And more and more the bullet was held out as a live political op-

tion in Grenada. In any case the GULP had already opted for the bullet. The then Premier even advised the JEWEL that there were many more interesting ways to die than through a police bullet.

## CHAPTER 8

### GAIRY HIMSELF

GAIRY himself was his own worst enemy. However, he had many things going for him.

Uncle Gairy was from the country side — the Dunfermline — Paradise area. Consequently he was in a position to see from a very young age, the oppression and the great suffering of the little man. When he went to town he should have observed the striking contrast between the facilities and amenities available in St. George's and those available in the rural areas. Maybe he did. We do not know. If he did, the fact remains that nothing significant was done to reverse the trend.

In fact, under his regime, this artificial difference was emphasised. More and more the town took the scars of colonial decadence. Increasingly the town came to be regarded as a playground for the rich, and a cesspool of vice. As time went on, and as tourism — Gairy style — was developed with a slant to St. George's the streets of the town became a haven for bands of unemployed youths from the countryside. These youths — coming from the surrounding countryside, and generally underprivileged — imagined that there was a chance to earn a fast dollar. But this turned out to be a mere mirage of the imperialist facade. We must make absolutely no mistake about it; the towns in the colonies were in fact a concretization of the colonialist imperialist presence.

The town was envisaged from the Colonial Office's standpoint, anyway — primarily as a means of securing the colonialist, imperialist control of the surrounding countryside. It had little or nothing to do with service to the rural areas. Control was the key.

But Sir Eric chose to perpetuate that situation — even in his over all security arrangements. The army had to be encamped in one spot — True Blue. The St. George's area soon came to be like one big police station — what with police stations at — Grand Anse, the Fire Station, the Fort, Melville Street, Beaulieu, two at St. Paul's, and one at his very gate. Apart from occasional marches and displays of strength to remind us that we were a conquered people, Gairy's army could

have been non-existent. The army was never made to see itself as a friend and defender of the people.

Maybe his own life — reportedly one of hardship — should have endowed him with a greater feeling of compassion — a more sublime understanding of the humanity of the people. But we can only speculate on that.

He gave our people a dream — a dream that we could one day be free. But it is truly sad that from the outset he saw that dream only in limited terms. It is worse that he should, later on, come to see that dream mainly in terms of personal fulfilment. For that is why the people's vision was transformed into a most bizarre nightmare.

He is quite a likeable fellow. In the earlier days this then hero of the people was such a charmer. He could get the people to do just about anything. We, the ordinary people, loved him so much! But he chose to disregard us; our interests meant little or nothing to him in the latter part of his rule.

He developed a penchant for impressing foreigners. And he came to see the ordinary folk as mere vehicles to this end. Perhaps he had been labouring under the weight of an inferiority complex. But even if that were the case, he went beyond all proportions. It could be that the extent of his power, and the adulation of his supporters surprised him, and so corrupted him. As the people say it: Probably he was suffering from 'Ah never thought!.. Who knows?

Long after the people had ceased to take his honours seriously he continued to hunt for these. He insisted on boasting of where he slept, where and what he ate, of how much he was loved and respected by foreign leaders, and how he could dress and how 'he so nice'.

He forgot that we, the people had started to confer our own honours on him — to mock him. When he received his bogus nighthoods the people conferred a KCMG on him. But it was a KCMG with a difference. It meant Knight Commander of the Mongoose Gang. His O. L. was caricatured to Oppressive Leader. His doctorate was combined with his Grand Cross this, and Grand Cross that to be called Doctor of Crosses — a way of stating that he was a cross which the people had to bear.

This later earned him the sobriquet — Doctor Cross. His obsession with UFO's came to signify "Uncle 'Fraid Opposition". His once beloved Grenada United Labour Party (GULP) was mockingly referred to as "Give Uncle Your Last Penny"

So in addition to being the object of hatred, he came to incur the scorn and the contempt of the people. At various international forums he made himself a laughing stock. He became a veritable 'pappyshow'. But he took no heed.

Eric, Matthew Gairy had many handicaps from the outset. But the chief was that derived from the attitude towards the "carpenter's son" and that towards 'Nazareth'. Can any good come of this man — possessing relatively little formal education and bred in poverty; Can anything come out of the small, remote and obviously backward village Paradise?

There were some people, a minority, but a relatively powerful minority who arrogated for themselves the role of an aristocracy — whatever that could have been, or meant in a Grenadian context. Such people never gave Sir Eric a fair chance. And if we may judge their motives by their actions, these people wanted him to fail. And it is very doubtful too, whether they would have been happy to see a successful Gairy Government. Had he created a land of milk and honey they would still find fault. This is because they never forgot.

They never forgot 1951 — and what it meant for us, whom they chose to regard as the common people. And they never forgave Uncle Gairy for it notwithstanding the fact that he went from Uncle Gairy, hero, to friend and leader of the people to His Excellency Dr. the Rt. Honourable Sir Eric Matthew Gairy O.L.; K.G.C. (Jer.); FRSA; Kt. B; PhD; etc. etc; ad infinitum.

But it is a curious thing he always strove to obtain the admiration and the respect of these same people. And that was a mistake. These people, in the main, were culturally backward and politically very reactionary. As such they were patently unworthy of any one's emulation — let alone that of a leader of the masses. For these pseudo-aristos only had contempt for the masses; and only saw the masses from the point of view of so many wage-slaves to exploit, to oppress and to trample. Anyway Gairy hankered after their society. But in doing so, Sir Eric must have compromised his own outlook. And that is a pity. He had so much in his favour.

Thrown up from the very bowels of the people; thrust forward out of the guts of the oppressed and suffering masses; and the inevitable need for someone to articulate their trials and their woes one might think that Sir Eric should have remained closer to the people. It is hard to pass judgement less we be too harsh — in such matters. But perhaps he

would have done better by striving to uplift the masses out of the depths of poverty; striving to educate the masses and so rescue the Nation from the jaws of ignorance.

When one remembers the extent of his support and the level of his personal popularity among the masses, it is surprising that he never took the people into his confidence. It is even more surprising, too, that he should find it impossible to absorb the progressive forces into his party. These held positions in the seventies which were in fact a natural conclusion of those held by the Grenada United Labour Party at its inception. It is unfortunate that such an abundance of love and goodwill from the toiling masses should be so blatantly and unfeelingly squandered upon the altars of egoism and egotism.

He eventually had nothing but contempt for the masses, who saw him as a liberator. Instead he strove to be a 'representative', a member of the exclusive club. That Club saw him as a country boy who had the audacity to invade their 'town world' then 'white world'. He was an upstart! In fact he did not want his constituency. But he had the presence of mind to recognize that the establishment and the town never liked him. How else can one explain the fact that Gairy gave active consideration to falling back on North St. Andrew's — a place for which he had done relative little — when he felt threatened in the 1976 elections.

Gairy, as time went on, seemed to become more and more confounded by fear. A fear that was, in the earlier stages, misplaced anyway. One is left befuddled as to why Sir Eric, obviously a man of some ability and intelligence should permit himself to sink so low. Towards the end, more and more he came to rely on obeah, mumbo-jumbo, and superstition as tools of politics. He made no secret about his witchcraft. He quite openly blandished his involvement. Culturally he remains underdeveloped, e.g. dreams were told at General Council as part of the agenda.

Maybe, just maybe, the aggressiveness with which his position was threatened in 1973 had jolted him completely off balance. It must be remembered that with the coming of the JEWEL on the scene a new militancy and a greater sense of urgency too — was injected into Grenadian politics. Faced with the new situation, he displayed his 'unfittability' to rule.

However, this is no excuse for the atrocities committed. Nor is it a justification for those who held and still do hold the belief that Gairy was bound to fail simply because he lacked a high level of formal education.

History is replete with examples that make such an ascription ridiculous. Indeed the ruler should first and foremost have a purpose. That purpose should spring from an understanding of the basic assumptions of the society. That purpose should undergo a process of refinement and purification in the chamber of the needs, interests, inspirations and aspirations of the people.

The people is seldom wrong. The people may not understand the intricacies of a theory of Economic growth. The people may not understand the laws of science, or the principles of Government, or legal procedures.

But let no one make any mistake about it. When it comes to matters which are of basic concern, or which seriously affect everyday life the most backward rustic would display a level of wisdom and understanding that would astonish the most erudite university professor. The people always speak on such matters with a level of clarity and precision of thought that never ceases to amaze those who are not accustomed to listen to the voices of the people. In other words all that is necessary is that one speaks to the people in simple terms on things that matter. And a vast reservoir of guidance with an abundant source would become available. But Gairy failed here. He chose to listen to supernatural voices which he claimed to hear.

The leader must be a fine judge of men. He must be able to attract and to gather around him, the best men available in the community. Gairy had ties with the new Businessmen earlier mentioned. Many of them were men of outstanding ability. It is amazing that he never managed to get them into his Government. Maybe they never really trusted him.

Perhaps these men had aligned themselves with Gairy simply out of the comradely feeling generated in men coming from the same background, and who discover that they must fight hard — on a continuing basis to defend their own sense of manhood. Such men had it very hard notwithstanding their personal ability, their great sacrifice and their eventual achievement of a reasonable level of income and personal well-being.

People of any acceptable level of humanity cannot but feel a sense of sympathy and compassion when they listen to what these men had to go through. Such a condition has left them with a massive feeling of insecurity, and of bitterness, despite their accomplishments.

Whatever may be said about them they were frugal, and

likely to behave sensibly in matters of money, and management of the affairs of the country. In any case they would have done a sight better than the buffons that Gairy selected. But Gairy never seemed to be comfortable with men of any level of ability.

If there is doubt on that score one has only to consider why George Hosten was demoted, or to have a chat with one or two of his more able men. Consider also the fates of L.C. J. Thomas, R.K. Douglas and Winston Whyte — in the G.U.L.P.

The leader must be seen to be fair minded; and well disciplined. He must develop the critical approach to situations. This implies the paramount necessity of accepting criticism and self-criticism as well. He must be flexible, and be prepared to move with the times and with changing circumstances.

But Gairy — like nearly all the other Caribbean leaders of his time — came to power with the image of a troublemaker and political rabble rouser. One wonders why Gairy could not make a convincing change of image — notwithstanding his obsession with personal honours. However, one of his contemporaries, Mr. Rennie, put his finger on the nail when he commented: "Gairy has no discipline whatever, he never had any ... He had no stateliness about him..... All he had was vanity. And in the end vanity is what brought him down".

Another of his contemporaries when I had asked him to read this chapter had this to say after his perusal: "All that you have said so far is quite well and good. But there are three points which must never be left out if you want to help people to understand Gairy's character.

*"No 1: He is a cheat.*

*"No 2: He was always disloyal.*

*"No 3: He always thought that his own way was the only right way. 'I'll give you a few instances to let you see what I am talking about,' he continued.*

"He was always bad-pay". And then with annoyance at the memory he recalled: "There was an old lady named Tan Sanny. She used to sell bread and fry salt fish by LaFayette School. And this boy (meaning the man Gairy) could say he take advantage of that old lady".

He further stated to me too how reckless and conceited the young Eric was. "There was a lung mango tree behind his



er's house" the gentleman continued. "Mrs. Gairy used y to make a little turn hand with it you know. One eve- Gairy came home and she was not there. He climbed tree and sucked a lot. When his mother returned she ded him about it. She told him that she needed the few nies. That he should not suck so much mangoes. Later on went out. You know what that boy did?" he paused. s climbed the tree and shook down everything - ripe ones, f ripe ones, and young ones".

Perhaps it was a distant symbol of his psychic forecast ich triggered off and developed into the shaking downpour power on "Bloody Monday". But this is another field of quiry — a branch of science with which I am not too well quainted. And so, I leave some readers and Sir Eric himself judge.

However, Uncle Gairy had a mission. And many feel he arted off well. Maybe he meant well; no one knows for cer- ain. Perhaps in taking up the mantle of state leadership he ad attained his personal level of incompetence. It would be nteresting to read his personal recollections of his years in ffice — if he can muster the discipline to sit down and vrite it. That, rather than hatching plans for mercenary in- asion — would be a great service to Grenada. It may help to eal the wounds and to eradicate the serious divisions inheri- ed by the People's Revolutionary Government, (PRG).

March 13, 1979.

### THE TYRANT IS NO MORE

Hurrah!  
The tyrant gone!  
The tyrant is no more.

Forward on !  
Onward ! Forward on!  
To victory we must go!

To freedom!  
And to peace!  
Our human rights restore!

Forward comrades!  
Never cease  
The tyrant is no more.

SPIRIT OF OUR HEROES June 19, 1977

O Grenada! My land!  
Your land! Our land!  
Oppressed by the tyrant!

Sweet mother!  
Mother of the freedom fighters.  
Arise My Mother! Arise!  
Enclose us in your bosom.

O Grenada! When Grenada  
When shall we be free?  
Your children Grenada. ....  
Your children.

Where is Fedon?  
Donovan?  
Marryshow?  
Butler?  
Where is their spirit?  
Dead? Slumbering?

O, were they to be released  
Yes! Released  
From the bowels of the earth,  
With thunder, and with lightening from the gods

To crush, and to destroy the tyrant,  
To give us peace

Rest  
To drive us on.....To show us the road  
The road that leads to freedom.

LAMENT FOR FREEDOM 18th Nov. 1978

What's it worth.....  
This half life of unfreedom and oppression?  
Why not fight. ....  
Throw off the tyrant and his yoke?  
When shall it be. ....  
Oh freedom sweet when shall you come?  
What's it like. ....  
Your face. .... so long. .... we have not seen?  
Where h've you been. ....  
In lands afar. .... hiding. .... not caring?

FIGHT

Why not fight  
Fight the tyrant in his way  
Fight the tyrant all the way  
Fight the tyrant night and day.

Fight the tyrant oh children  
Even in your play.  
Fight the tyrant one and all  
Fight on! 'Tis freedom's call.

STAY UP FIGHTERS

Stay up! Stay up Fighters!  
My brother fighters! My comrade fighters!  
Men of the P.R.A.! Valiant sons!

Defend the shores!  
Defend the freedom won!  
Defend our native land!

## ON FIRST MERCENARY ALERT

### FIGHT ON PRA.

Guarding the beaches,  
Patrolling the streets.  
Watching the hilltops  
Watching from the hilltops.

Our comrades in the PRA  
Our brothers in the PRA  
Valiant sons and daughters too  
All fighters in the PRA.

Defending the Revolution  
Defending our freedom.  
Defending our humanity  
Defending our native land.

Fighting destabilisation,  
Writing chapters!  
Valiant chapters of history.  
Fight on!  
Comrades! Brothers!  
Fight on!

### CRUSH THEM    November 4, 1979

The tyrant!  
He coming back!  
What shall we do?

America!  
Bosom of tyrants!  
She helpin' him.  
To the guns!  
To the guns comrades!  
Fast! Like arrows fly!

Watchout!  
The enemy within!  
The enemy without!  
Crush them!  
Save our freedom!  
Save our land!